हे पुस्तक
मोडल आहे
साधारण बाइंडींग

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-400 023.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 27 February, 2016

LIFE

AND

LITERARY REMAINS

OF

L. E. L.

00023366

LIFE

AND

LITERARY REMAINS

OF

L. E. L.

BY LAMAN BLANCHARD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

23366

"It is a weary and a bitter hour,
When first the real disturbs the poet's world,
And he distrusts the future. Not for that
Should cold despondency weigh down the soul,
It is a glorious gift, bright Poetry,
And should be thankfully and nobly used.
Let it look up to Heaven!"—L. E. L.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HENRY COLBURN,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1841.

926.217
Lan/Bla/Lit
23366

INTRODUCTION.

THE following sketch of the literary and personal life of L. E L. has been executed in fulfilment of a pledge given to her long before she meditated leaving England, and renewed immediately previous to her departure. I should not otherwise have presumed to attempt anything of the kind. A few years ago, when England had just lost one of her ablest writers, she thus expressed herself in a letter replying to my suggestion that she should review his works—"I almost fear to praise such a man; but comfort myself with thinking that though few can raise 'the carved marble over a great author's remains, all may throw a flower on his grave."

When supplying me with some materials for a short sketch of her life, published in the "New

Monthly Magazine," she wrote thus: "These, I believe, are all the facts I can give you at present. Feelings are but poor substitutes in a memoir—else what a life would mine be! . . . But these are for a later biography, which I shall also entrust to you."

The suddenness of her death prevented her from making the necessary preparations for that later biography. Her design, however, has been accomplished, as far as possible. Much of what was essential to its accomplishment, has been supplied by the anxious care of her family, and the grateful zeal of some of her personal friends. To them, the writer's thanks are here given for enabling him, at least partially, to fulfil his obligations to the object of their common regard.

What is now submitted to the public, could not well have been written earlier. The interval between her death, and the publication of these volumes, has not been idly spent by those whose duty it was to investigate the circumstances under which she died. The hope of entirely elucidating all that was mysterious in her fate, forbade an earlier effort to relieve that public anxiety, which

was evidence equally of pity for her misfortunes, and appreciation of her worth. L. B.

Of the writings of L. E. L. that appear in these volumes, none have been published before but the "Subjects for Pictures, &c." and the mottoes to some of the chapters of "Ethel Churchill," which had been previously uncollected. Two or three of the essays on the "Female Characters of Scott" had been printed in an incomplete state. The rest are entirely new. In addition to the letters and poems that are interwoven with the memoir, the tragedy of "Castruccio Castrucani" is published for the first time.

JOHN LEIGHTON, PRINTER,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON.

MEMOIR,

&c. &c.

All the information relative to the family of L. E. L. that may be requisite as introductory to a record of her life, may be gathered without recurring to a remoter period than the commencement of the eighteenth century. The Landons appear to have been at that time settled at Crednall, in Herefordshire, where they enjoyed some landed property, in the possession of which they flourished until about the period of the South Sea mania, when one of them, Sir William Landon, Knt., concluded a series of enterprises, by which the circumstances of the family had been materially advanced, with some less prosperous speculations, whose issue involved the total loss of the patrimonial estates. Of the next generation, thus left to "sink or swim," as fortune willed it, some kept afloat, and the church seems to have been their ark of safety. One of Sir William's descendants,

the great grandfather of L. E. L., abundantly repaid the succour thus afforded to him, by a zealous and devout championship of the church against "all dissenters" in that day: as is apparent from a tablet on the north wall of the chancel in the church of Tedstone Delamere, near Bromyard, Herefordshire. The inscription runs thus:—"The Rev. John Landon, rector of Nursted and Ilsted, in Kent, died June 3rd, 1777, aged 77. His religious principles and literary abilities were evident from what he did and wrote in vindication of the religion he professed, to the utter confutation of all dissenters."

Of the writings of this faithful servant of the church we know nothing whatever; but as the first of the Landons whose "literary abilities" were signalized, or at all events, of whose exercise of them any record remains, his name must be here held worthy of honoring remembrance. The tablet was probably erected by his son, the Rev. John Landon, who had been presented, upwards of thirty years before (in 1749), to the rectory of Tedstone Delamere, and who held that living, to his own honour and the advantage of his parishioners, until 1782. And it may be mentioned that a green and flourishing token of the age and respectability of this family, is still visible in the church above referred to; for there, we believe to this day, is to be seen, round the tomb of one of the Landons, a

fresh and luxuriant growth of hazels, thriving within the walls of the old edifice.

Severe injuries, occasioned by a fall from his horse, rendered the latter years of the rector of Tedstone painful to himself, and perhaps less profitable to his family than they might otherwise have been; for about the period of his death (the living being his own), the advowson, together with Tedstone-court and estate, was sold, and a family consisting of eight children were left with very little but their own exertions and a respectable name, to depend upon for their advancement in the world.

The eldest of the sons was John Landon, the father of L. E. L. For him, perhaps, the quiet and unvarying life of a country clergyman would have possessed few charms, even had the fortune of his father and grandfather, the gift of a living, awaited him at the outset of life. At an early age his active and enterprising disposition seemed to point to the sea as the profession best suited to his tastes, and, while yet very young, to sea he went. Of two voyages that he made, the first was to the south coast of Africa—to that country on whose western shores, in after years, a being, who employed to the most virtuous ends, and with generous devotion, the life she drew from him, was destined to find a grave. Thence the young voyager returned in safety; and, with the same promises of success in his career, he sailed subsequently to

Jamaica. But the death of his friend and patron, Admiral Bowyer, cast (it may be supposed) a cloud over his sea-prospects, and blighted the hopes that had sprung out of his adoption of a naval profession.

In the meantime his brother, Whittington (the second of the sons of the Rev. John Landon), had made rapid advancement at Oxford. Acquiring the favour and patronage of the Duke of Portland, his career at Worcester college, of which he was Provost for more than thirty years, was accompanied by distinguished fortune in the church, and his course of prosperity was crowned in due season by his appointment to the valuable deanery of Exeter, which he held until his recent decease, in January, 1839. Through the influential connections of the younger brother, better prospects at home were opened to the elder; and at length, through the means of a mutual friend, Mr. Churchill, an introduction was obtained to the respectable and prosperous house of Adair, the army-agent, in Pall Mall. John Landon was speedily established in the lucrative business of an army-agency, becoming a partner in the house, and at no distant date the possessor of considerable property.

Thus settled in life, Mr. Landon married, and with his wife (Catharine Jane Bishop, a lady of Welsh extraction), took up his residence in Hans-place, Chelsea. There, in the house which is now

No. 25, their daughter, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, was born, on the 14th of August, 1802. She was the eldest of three children; one, a girl, died in her thirteenth year; the other still survives, the attached brother, and long the inseparable companion of L. E. L.,—the Rev. Whittington Henry Landon, M.A.

1802 to 1815.

It is remarkable that the greater portion of L. E. L.'s existence was passed on the spot where she was born. From Hans-place and its neighbourhood she was seldom absent, and then not for any great length of time: until within a year or two of her death she had there found her home; not, indeed, in the house of her birth, but generally close by. Taken occasionally, during the earlier years of childhood, into the country, it was to Hans-place she returned; here some of her school-time was passed; when her parents removed, she yet clung to the old spot, and as her own mistress, chose the same scene for her residence. When one series of inmates quitted it, she still resided there with their successors, returning continually, after every wandering, "like a blackbird to his bush."

L. E. L. was a reader almost in her cradle, and

a writer, if the term may be employed when the mechanical aids to authorship were wanting, before she had been many years out of it. Her first efforts in learning were indicative of acute intellect; and the uses to which she invariably turned the rewards of her quickness and diligence already implied the presence of those admirable qualities, which afterwards characterised her private life. Need we here say to any that ever knew her, that we mean the ardour of her affections, and the unreserved generosity of her nature. It is not less because it is believed that the public would desire to know all that can be related about the earliest years of one who has interested and delighted them so long, than because it is certain that some of the most trivial and childish circumstances will serve to exhibit those qualities of the intellect and the heart—that to these pages are transferred such anecdotes of her infancy as the fond recollections of her first friends have treasured up and supplied.

She was taught to read by an invalid friend and neighbour, who amused herself by scattering the letters of the alphabet over the carpet, and making her little pupil pick them up as they were named. The principle of rewards was adopted solely, and these rewards, as they were won, were as regularly brought to *her brother*. That living relative who was her only playmate and companion, relates, in a letter from which we write, — "If she came

home without a reward, she went up stairs with her nurse, of whom she was particularly fond, to be comforted; but when she brought her reward with her, she never failed to display it in the drawing-room, and then share it with me. She must," he adds, "have been very quick at that early age, for she seldom came empty-handed, and I soon began to look for the hour of her return, for which I had such very good reasons."

When in her sixth year she was sent to a school kept by Miss Rowden,* at No. 22, Hans-place,—the house in which she afterwards resided for several years as a boarder. It seems to have been appropriated to such purposes from the time it was built; nor was L. E. L. the first who drank at the "well of English" within its walls. Miss Mitford, we believe, was educated there, and Lady Caroline Lamb was an inmate for a time. Here the little pupil's powers were so highly appreciated, that Miss Rowden presented her with a frock of her own working; it was long regarded as a robe of grace. One only complaint of misconduct in "the clever little child" was ever made, but this was a frequent one, and the fault was strikingly characteristic. Nothing could make L. E. L. walk quietly

* The lady was herself a poetess, and otherwise highly accomplished. She afterwards became Countess St. Quentin, and died in the neighbourhood of Paris.

in the ranks with other children. The family residing near, she was sure to espy one of them, or a servant, or her nurse, and dart away she would. "On one of these occasions," says her brother, "and it is the second trait that I vividly call to remembrance, her nurse had purposely thrown herself in the way of the school and brought home her charge. My sister, on her arrival, wanted me to descend from a magnificent rocking-horse on which I chanced to be mounted, and on my refusal to surrender, she threw a tamboureen at me; it struck me on the face and brought me to the ground. The hurt was worse than she imagined it to be at the moment, but it brought out her natural disposition—for she petted me more than ever, and I had everything my own way a long time after. Indeed it was the luckiest hit for me ever made in the nursery."

At this school L. E. L. remained only a few months. Hitherto she had not been absent from London but on short visits to a place called Coventry-farm, on the borders of Hertfordshire, in which her father had speculated deeply, confiding the superintendance of the project to the care of a brother. This was, in fact, the source of his subsequent embarrassments. Now, when the young student was scarcely seven years old, the family removed to Trevor-park, East Barnet, where the care of her instruction was undertaken by her cousin,

Miss Landon, whose zeal and guidance were repaid with the most constant acknowledgment of her worth. Some passages of a letter from this lady, in which she recals the hours long past that were beneficially devoted to the interests of her charge, will happily exhibit the spirit of the modest and admiring teacher, while they strikingly exemplify the progress and character of the pupil. "In very many instances," says the writer, "in endeavouring to teach, I have myself been taught, the extraordinary memory and genius of the learner soon leaving the humble abilities of the teacher far behind. Any experienced person used to instruction would have smiled at hearing us. When I asked Letitia any question relating either to history, geography, grammar—to Plutarch's Lives, or to any book we had been reading, I was pretty certain her answers would be perfectly correct; still, not exactly recollecting, and unwilling she should find out just then that I was less learned than herself, I used thus to question her:—'Are you quite certain?' 'Oh yes, quite!' 'You feel sure you are correct?' 'Yes, very sure.' 'Well then, to be perfectly right, bring the book and let us look over it again.' I never knew her to be wrong. * * * At so early an age as this, she would occupy an hour or two of the evening amusing her father and mother with accounts of the wonderful castles she had built in her imagination; and when,

rambling in the garden in fair weather, she had taken with her, as a companion, a long stick, which she called her measuring stick; she was asked, 'What that was for?' her answer would be, 'Oh, don't speak to me, I have such a delightful thought in my head.' And on she would go talking to herself. There was a little world of happiness within her; and even then, the genius afterwards developed was constantly struggling to break forth."

The works read at this period were precisely those that happened to be at hand, or were most readily procurable. The list opens, of course, with grammars and catechisms, glances at geography, Rollin's Ancient History, Hume and Smollett; then come Plutarch's Lives, the Fables of Gay and Æsop, Life of Josephus, Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws, Dobson's Life of Petrarch, and many others, more or less adapted to the young reader. "I always," remarks the thoughtful cousin, "made it my particular care never to allow of her reading any novels, knowing it would only weaken her mind, and give it a distaste for more serious reading." Nevertheless, this restriction was somewhat less effective than it was intended to be; for he who shared in L. E. L.'s sports and pastimes, permitted or surreptitious, has a clear impression, that during the days of childhood, not less than from a hundred to a hundred and fifty volumes of the *Poets and Novelists* (Cooke's edi-

tion!) were all read through, forbidden though they were.

Books, and books only, whatever could be procured, were her delight from the first moment that she could read. Her capacity for acquiring knowledge was remarkable. The two masters from whom she received French lessons found the task of instructing her a new kind of pleasure; not only were her exercises always ready and correct, but she seemed to meet her teachers half way, and if told one word, knew another as though by intuition. Yet, it must be admitted, that to the rule "whatever she attempted, she thoroughly mastered," there were two exceptions; the future poetess excelled neither in music, of which she, nevertheless, understood the very soul, nor in an art which, throughout her life, she incessantly practised—penmanship. Her cousin states that, "although Letitia's kind and accomplished friend, Miss Bissett, spared no pains during several years, to impart the same brilliant touch and execution she herself possessed, the attempt to make her proficient in music was vain. Yet" (she adds) "music seemed to charm and inspire her; for hours she would sit writing upon her slate while any one played or sang." As for her proficiency in penmanship, her brother graphically pictures the fruitless effort. "Learning to write," he says, "was a source of extreme trouble to her, and of frequent imprison-

ment to me. (This we shall explain presently.) A kind old gentleman who witnessed this distress, and who never believed that any fault whatever rested with her, undertook to teach her himself.—And the copy-book was ruled, and his spectacles were rubbed, and his knife prepared to make the best pen possible; but it would not do; a broad nib and a fine nib, a hard pen and a soft pen, all failed, for in each case it was still *a pen*. At last he gave the task up in despair; he shook his head mournfully and said, 'No, your dear little fingers are too straight;' gave her a forgiving kiss, told her she was 'a dab at pothooks,' took up his hat, walked out, and never renewed his attempt."

To explain the foregoing allusion to the "imprisonment" of the young brother and playmate on his sister's account, it is necessary to introduce an anecdote, and to quote a remark of his, which, in its application to her, was as strictly true in her maturer years as in her childhood. "It was," he observes, "no easy thing to subdue her will, except through her affections." Hence, possibly, the adoption of a discipline that formed part of the educational system at Treyor-park, of punishing the one when the other deserved it! When either was "in disgrace"—that was the term used—the unoffending party was locked up in a dark closet, and, says Mr. Landon, "this effectually secured obedience and attention." He adds, with his usual

recollection of the kindness of his sister—"On these occasions, the nurse, who had no notion of any such discipline, or, indeed, of any at all with either of us, always pushed under the door apples, sweetmeats, or roasted chesnuts; these she invariably saved, when locked up on my account, and gave me when she came out."

Difficult as it may be for grateful remembrance to avoid exaggeration, there is no partiality in the assertion, that even at the age we are speaking of, she would endure anything, and give up anything. She was encouraged, and grew, year by year, in these habits of fortitude and self-denial. We have another anecdote illustrative of the same feeling, and recorded in a similar spirit. Her devotedness to reading was only equalled by the readiness with which she acquired whatever she chose to commit to memory, and the accuracy with which she retained whatever she had once learned. Mr. Landon remembers one instance of this quickness. "I had petitioned my father for three shillings, when he offered me, by way of compromise, a new eighteenpenny-piece if I would learn and repeat to him the ballad—

> 'Gentle river, gentle river,
> Lo! thy streams are stained with gore,' &c.

But as this same ballad was some thirty verses long, and the payment inadequate, I struck for the three shillings, and would learn no ballad for

less. I was in disgrace accordingly. Without saying a word, my sister went out, came back in a very short time, and repeated the ballad for me—asked for the three shillings—got them, and a kiss or two besides. She then persuaded me to learn it, teaching it me verse by verse. I forget whether I ever said it; but I do *not* forget that she gave me the three shillings."

The spirit thus manifested found food in the subjects her reading embraced; and even the favourite pastimes of the brother and sister assumed a similar colour, and had their origin in the same associations. We do not allude to those amusements, which were continued, as opportunity offered, long after the brother had made his first appearance at school; amusements calculated to shock the rapt and romantic, if, being believers in fiction, they were not often incredulous as to fact—the amusements, in short, of donkey-riding, and racing, resorted to daily—of trap-ball, hoop, and bow-and-arrow, practised continually—even to the acquisition of an extraordinary degree of expertness, especially in the latter art. No; what we would particularize as the favourite pastime of the children, what may be characterized as their first ambition, was "to be Spartans." Mr. Landon says, "There could be no greater reproach between us than to call each other 'Sybarite,' and this long before I knew why; as far (he adds)

as Plutarch's Lives enabled her to comprehend Spartan maxims, she aimed at carrying them out—thieving alone excepted—and that, as her father told her, only because we were not in an enemy's country." And it is related by her cousin, that she would often give any dainty she was about to eat to some poor child who came to the gate, observing, as she turned away, "I would rather be a Spartan than a Sybarite."

One of the exploits of the young Spartans deserves, by way of specimen, to be recorded. For some wanton or heedless trespass, they had both one day been turned out of the garden. Their rage was so great that they hardly knew at first how to compass their revenge upon the gardener. "But, my sister," proceeds our authority on this grave matter, "proposed a rather curious method of taking vengeance. 'I tell you what—we'll make him a *public character!*' but as I did not know what that was, I thought it better to get our war-arrows (headed with nails instead of lead), and attack him on the spot. She was too much of a Spartan not at once to assent to the plan, and in another minute or two poor Joseph was stuck all over with arrows, for my sister, especially, was very expert. I shall never forget the man running at us, with his spade before his face; a charge which, as our weapons were not very 'Spartan,' ended the engagement at once. He took us both prisoners, and the punish-

ment he inflicted was not without some tincture of retributive justice; for he tossed us upon the top of a quickset hedge, and there left us. After some furious crying, we found we were not much hurt. I remember, amidst my trouble, inquiring if she had read of any Spartans who had been served as we were?—an idea that instantly converted her tears to laughter, as she said, 'Very like Spartans, indeed!' In about half an hour the gardener came, accepted our promises, and lifted us down."

This gardener is the hero of another story, which must be related, as it introduces the little L. E. L. in the character of a preceptor. "He was almost thirty years old," says Mr. Landon, "had not the slightest acquaintance with the alphabet, but was anxious to learn. My sister, assisted by me, taught him first his letters, then to spell, to read, and at last, to write. It was at the spelling-stage that we were most amused. We used to pick out the 'hard words' for his lessons, and it was our delight to laugh at his extraordinary mistakes, some of which were, no doubt, intentional ones, designed to make fun for us. When I went to school, at eight years of age, he became Letitia's pupil solely. He carried a small dictionary, her gift, in his hat, and would con over a word while at work, and then appeal to one of us for the meaning; the explanation generally increasing his difficulty, because it brought more words with it. The dictionary was,

with him, the one book needful; he was convinced that if he could but master *that*, all others would be perfectly easy. Such were the difficulties under which he persevered in the paths of useful knowledge! His name was Joseph Chambers; he lived with us many years, and only left when there was no longer any service for him. He subsequently obtained a 'milk-walk,' at Brompton, where, being enabled to rely on his own book-keeping, he made some little money, and is now landlord of a quiet hostelry at Barnet. He ever retained a very grateful regard for the memory of his little governess." The reader, who might happen to stop at Mr. Chambers's inn at Barnet, would, no doubt, obtain a verification of this narrative of the original joyousness of the young improvisatrice.

But we must not pass by the childish days of L. E. L., over the records of which we have not, it is hoped, lingered too long, without a glance at certain habits that were more peculiar to herself, and lay at the root of those literary aspirations which, long before the years of womanhood, indicated the workings of more than a woman's mind, and gave to poetry and romance a store of premature and unexpected treasures. Her genius seems to have sprung up

"Just as the grass grows that sows itself."

We have already seen her, in her cousin's description, pushing what she called her "measuring

stick" before her, as she took her daily walk in the garden, and deprecating interruption because she had a "beautiful thought" in her head. And this picture may be filled up by the recollections of her brother, who has known her to be pacing up and down the lime-walk for hours in this way—sometimes talking aloud, sometimes repeating verses, oftener in silent thought—the result of all which exercises would be, at night, a long story, or an account of her intended *travels*, to which he, more especially, had to listen. And listen he did, patiently for some time; but at last, perhaps he got tired, or annoyed at losing his only playfellow in so unaccountable a way: for a bargain was struck between the children, to the effect that on one day he was to listen while she talked, and on the next she was to adopt his amusements. "On her days," runs the reminiscence, "I had to undergo either the account of 'her island,' that is, of what she would do as another Robinson Crusoe, or some fairy tale or verses of her own composition; or perhaps the battle scene from the 'Lady of the Lake,' for the whole of that poem I think she knew by heart." The listener's patience, after a time, appears to have failed again, for a fresh stipulation was made that the something, whatever it might be, which was to fall from the lips of the eloquent young child, was not to be repeated "more than twice or three times at the most."

L. E. L. has alluded, in some verses on the death of Sir Walter Scott, to the time and scene thus recalled by Mr. Landon.

How well I can recall the time
When first I turn'd thy page;
The green boughs closed above my head,
A natural hermitage.

* * * * *

I peopled all the walks and shades
With images of thine;
The lime-tree was a lady's bower,
The yew-tree was a shrine:
Almost I deem'd each sunbeam shone
O'er banner, spear, and morion.

Her kind instructress also speaks of the ease and rapidity with which, at this time, she used to perform the task of writing themes upon given subjects. As soon as she *could* write, or rather make those pothooks which were afterwards to become the uncouth interpreters of such graceful meanings, "you would always," says the lady just alluded to, "see her with her slate; when not reading or talking it was her constant companion, morning, noon, and night; she invariably took it with her into her room when she retired to rest, though rest she could not always—for if any thought struck her in the night, it was written down, and I believe she as often wrote without a light as with one."

The date of the "first effort of her literary genius," is not known, but it is certain she was "very

young," and the subject was the adventures of her cousin Captain Landon, who had then just returned from America. As she wrote she exhibited passages for approval. Much time was devoted to this; but the results have not been preserved. One of her very earliest pieces was a sketch (published years afterwards) of the character of Sir John Doyle, written after perusing an account of the Peninsular War. Her mind was wonderfully moved by the recital of any great or good action; her countenance, always strikingly expressive, would lighten up even in childhood as she read; and so early was her character formed that she not only seemed then, but really was, capable of any exertion or any self-sacrifice. Not less singular was her capacity of judging the characters of persons; while yet a mere child her penetration in this respect was frequently remarked; and though at the time they would often say "Letitia, you are wrong," the truth of the opinions she had expressed was as often confirmed by experience.

To account for the associations of travelling, and especially of travels in *Africa*, that were early predominant in her mind, we need but revert first to the voyage made while yet a youth by her father, and next to a book which he gave her, bearing the title of "Silvester Tramper." This was the pet among her "pleasure books," rivalling for a time even Robinson Crusoe, and de-

cidedly eclipsing her fairy tales. She tried, in after life, to procure a copy of this work, but never could. Like Pistol, "it spoke of Africa and golden joys." It professed to be a narrative of travels in a region to her so fatal, and was full of wonders connected with bushmen, and lions literal and metaphorical—recounting narratives of much enterprize and adventure, illustrating, or rather exaggerating, the power which the arms and resources of a civilized few gave them over the savage many. At last her father presented her with the "Arabian Nights," and this acquisition soon settled the claims of Silvester and Robinson, by supplanting both. "Many a weary day," observes her brother, "those same Nights occasioned me—I had to hear all!"

L. E. L. reminded her brother, in a poem addressed to him in after years, of another volume, whose hero for a time eclipsed every other hero. Truth seemed indeed stranger than fiction as they read Cook's voyages:—

"It was an August evening, with sunset in the trees,
When home you brought his Voyages who found the fair South Seas; . . . . .
For weeks he was our idol, we sailed with him at Sea,
And the pond amid the willows our ocean seemed to be;
The water-lilies growing beneath the morning smile,
We called the South Sea islands, each flower a different isle.
Within that lonely garden what happy hours went by,
While we fancied that around us spread foreign sea and sky."

The mention of the paternal gift (the "Arabian Nights"), suggests a reference, before we proceed further, to a little sketch in which the circumstance is mentioned by L. E. L. herself. It is called "The History of a Child," and formed one of about a dozen sketches published in 1836, under the title of "Traits and Trials of Early Life." Some of the incidents of her own childhood are related in it; but the whole bear the same relation to reality that phantasies bear to facts. The joy in the gift, the "delicious odour of the Russian leather," and the charm of the "pictures that glanced through the half-opened leaves," as she received the precious volumes—the excitement of "reading those enchanted pages," which was ranked as the "most delicious of her life"—may all be unexaggerated; but for the other events, the scenes, the feelings associated with them, they are just as unlike her own history, as Robinson Crusoe's island is unlike England. Taking this sketch in an autobiographical sense, we see in the heroine a shy, melancholy, lonely, unloved child—whose pride is stung by whispered affronts from servants about her "plainness"—whose affections are jokes or mysteries to all about her—whose heart breaks when her nurse calls her "a tiresome little thing"—and who, left to ruminate in solitude, found no pleasure but in a sense of neglect and presentiments of misery. Now the real L. E. L. was anything on

earth but this. True, she seldom mixed with other children, for one reason, that there were none of her own age in the neighbourhood; true, that although very affectionate, she never cared to "pet" any animal, dog, cat, or bird—nor took pleasure in girlish toys; for her "pleasure-books" were her sole pets. But it is just as certain that so far from being a gloomy child, all who knew her laugh at such a notion. Now and then, as her cousin remembers, a certain violence of temper would get the better of the young student, and on such occasions her unfortunate books were condemned to take up their abode in different directions; but calmly to replace them, at a word, or even a look of admonition, was enough — "her tears flowed abundantly—she would kneel down and beg God to forgive her." Her temper, says this respected relative, was cheerful and kind; "and she lived only with those who loved her for herself, and wished solely for her good."

"I have told the history of my childhood," wrote L.E.L., concluding the little imaginative sketch of which mention has been made; "childhood which images forth our after life. Even such has been mine—it has but repeated what it learnt from the first, sorrow, beauty, love, and death." In contrast with the romance of this picture, and to clear up all mistakes as to the original melancholy of her nature, we must set before the reader

a picture painted in far pleasanter colours, not even admitting that the truth is less poetical than the fiction. He who knew her childish feelings and habits so well, sharing her sports and seeing into her very dreams, gives us this assurance that "up to the age of thirteen, when the family quitted Trevor-park, she was a strong healthy child, a joyous and high-spirited romp. Nor," he proceeds, "was this disposition ever wholly lost. When, indeed, thought began to deepen, and the imagination to unfold, it then only changed to the milder and less childish form of playful wit and social cheerfulness." Such were the early days of the happy L. E. L.; and such, we venture to assert, were the feelings with which, when those days were passed, she commenced her career in the world.

1815 to 1824.

After a year's residence at Lewis-place, Fulham, Mr. Landon removed with his family to Old Brompton. Here a considerable period of L.E.L.'s youth was passed. Under the guiding care of her mother, the good and generous qualities of her nature continued to have fair play and to flourish; while those powers of intellect and imagination, which had been early signalized, acquired ripeness

and strength so gradually as to insure, in the minds of her friends, the fulfilment of every gratifying promise. The days of tasks and lessons over, her studies took their own turn, and the tastes she displayed were those of the poetry and the romance that coloured all her visions, waking or asleep. Pen and ink had succeeded to the slate, writing to scribbling, distinct images to phantasies that had as little form as substance; and it followed that ideas of publication and a thirst for fame should succeed to the first natural charm of parental kisses and family pats on the head — the delicious encouragement of an occasional "not so bad!" or even a "very clever, indeed!" from some more enthusiastic patron. The desire was soon gratified. Mr. Jerdan, under whose management the "Literary Gazette," then recently established, was rapidly acquiring a large circulation and exercising great literary influence, happened to be a neighbour of the Landons, and to him, as an arbiter of the destinies of young authors, and a man of the kindliest disposition, admitted even in quarters where the utmost difference of literary opinion prevailed, an introduction was, without much difficulty, obtained. Fragments of romance, snatches of song, "fancies and good nights," pieces composed with about as much art as a young bird might exhibit in its first chirpings—were submitted with mingled hope and fear for the critic's judg-

ment, and this was speedily given in a form of frank and strong encouragement. In some of the earliest verses that were shown to him, Mr. Jerdan had the taste and feeling to perceive the faint colourings of a dawn that was to resemble

"The uncertain glory of an April day."

If he could not pronounce every set of verses to be a poem, he could well discern that nobody but a poet had written them. If they were not evidences of the power and mastery of the divine art, they were proofs of a love of it too intense to fail in working out some of the sweetest of its objects. As he felt he spoke; the encouragement had an instant effect; and the "Child of Song" had the delight, not long after, of seeing some of her verses included among the original poetry of the influential and fame-dispensing "Literary Gazette."

The effect of this editorial compliment, and the praise that accompanied it, remained long upon her mind, comforting her under some trials to which her family were about that time subjected, by feeding her enthusiastic hopes of being able, in after years, to attach honour to their name, and to aid their fortunes. When she was about eighteen years old, she commenced a letter to her cousin, with a reference to some opinions just then pronounced by the same critical authority, and then ran on in a strain which shows that all her child-

like simplicity of feeling, and thoughtful light-heartedness, had been unchangeably preserved.

"DEAR COUSIN,

"Are you pleased with me? Am I not happy? 'An elegance of mind peculiarly graceful in a female;'—is not this the praise you would have wished me to obtain? Has all your trouble been thrown away? It has always been my most earnest wish to do something that might prove your time had not been altogether lost. To excel is to show my grateful affection to you. The poem is now entirely finished. I hope you will like 'Adelaide.' I wished to pourtray a gentle soft character, and to paint in her the most delicate love. I fear her dying of it is a little romantic; yet, what was I to do, as her death must terminate it? Pray do you think, as you are the model of my, I hope, charming heroine, you could have contrived to descend to the grave

'Pale martyr to love's wasting flame?'

Not only is the second canto concluded, but I have written all the minor pieces I intend inserting. And now, dear cousin, I do so long to be with you, if it were only to show you how amiable I intend being. I will not be passionate; and, as to Elizabeth, I will be so good-natured—I will be to her what you have been to me. . . . . I never

knew how delightful it was to be at home until I was away. It is all very pleasant to go out for a day or two. I do not mean to say I do not like it, but when it comes to be week upon week and month upon month (for it is now four months since I saw any of you) I am heartily tired. . . . . I hate to be continually obliged to think of what I must say, for fear of offending some one or other —however, I never had the slightest disagreement with one of them. On the whole, I compare my visit to Clifton to a sunny day in December. . . . . I have such a delightful room to sit in, where I usually spend mornings and evenings—I have borrowed Miss Elizabeth Smith's 'Fragments,' I like them so much. I am quite in Miss C.'s good graces—it is impossible to help laughing at her, but it never offends her—on the contrary she exclaims, 'Well now, dear heart alive, I am so glad to find you have such good spirits!' I believe my aunt thinks me not a little rhodomontade, but it is very excusable at present. I am happy for three things; first, I am so enchanted with Mr. Jerdan's note; secondly, so pleased at having left Clifton; and last, though not least, I am so delighted to think it will not be long before I shall see you all again."

This letter, which, like every one of the hundreds we have seen from the same hand, is without

a date, was written from Gloucestershire, where, in 1820, she was staying on a visit to some of her relatives, having previously visited Clifton (as referred to in the letter) accompanied by her grandmother. This was the first time she had ever quitted home. We see how her heart returns to it. Separated from what she had most associated with, she can but compare her days to glimpses of December sunshine—warm and bright only by comparison.

The poem thus alluded to as being entirely finished, formed the principal feature of a little volume, published in the summer of the following year, by Mr. Warren, of Bond-street. Its title was "The Fate of Adelaide," a Swiss romantic tale, and it was dedicated to Mrs. Siddons. The story is of love, war, and misery. Adelaide loves and is loved, but her Orlando is inconstant; war calls him to the east, and there he marries; both ladies die for him,—

——— "They laid
Zoraide (for so she wish'd it) by the side
Of her sweet rival."—

and the hero hangs over the grave, a melancholy man, to point the moral of the lay. The poem and the minor verses that follow it, were of value only as promises—as indications of poetical genius; and these promises were soon redeemed by an assiduous cultivation of that beautiful faculty of song

which, like mercy, is twice blessed, being ever in its best and highest exercise a joy inestimable.

Immediately after the publication of this volume she commenced, in the "Literary Gazette," a series of "Poetical Sketches," to which was affixed her initials only,—"L. E. L." The three letters very speedily became a signature of magical interest and curiosity. Struck by the evident youth of the writer, by the force as well as the grace of her careless and hurried notes, by the impassioned tenderness of the many songs and sketches that, week after week, without intermission, appeared under the same signature, the public unhesitatingly recognised these contributions as the fresh and unstudied outpourings of genius; and they, by whom the loftier beauties and the more cultivated grace of the living masters of the lyre were best appreciated, at once, "with open arms received one poet more." Not only was the whole tribe of initialists throughout the land eclipsed, but the initials became *a name.*

From the summer of 1821, to that of 1824, these contributions were uninterruptedly continued. It is impossible not to be struck with the profusion in which they were poured forth. Five or six snatches of song in a week, few of them without some charm of tenderness or fancy, or a brief tale of struggling passion, delineating some chivalrous character, and abounding in the picturesque—

these were read in many quarters with the admiration which glances over defects and dwells on the result—the general image of beauty presented to the mind. It was thus that the young initialist "woke, and found herself famous." Perhaps the L. E. L. itself, the compromise between the anonymous and the full announcement, the partial revelation, the namelessness of the name, had the effect of stimulating curiosity. That the poet was a "young lady yet in her teens," as the editor answering inquiries, at length announced, was a circumstance that did not, we may be sure, detract from the charm. Old poets read, and younger ones wrote verses to her. One of them, Bernard Barton, thus closes an admiring apostrophe, published in February, 1822, months before the object of it had attained her twentieth year:—

"I know not who, or what, thou art,
Nor do I seek to know thee,
Whilst thou, performing thus thy part,
Such banquets can bestow me.
Then be, as long as thou shalt list,
My viewless, nameless melodist."

And this she was to thousands beside the minstrel. With the young she at once became a favourite. She breathed in rapturous verse their own fervent and wild aspirations—she unfolded to them the visions of their morning; nor did she the less retain this hold upon them, because they shrunk with

a sudden chillness from her blank and dreary pictures of destiny, and her sombre predictions wrung from them tears of needless pity.

A writer of the first literary rank, in one of the volumes of the "New Monthly," for the year 1831, has referred to the "sensation" created by our subject on her first appearance in the pages of the "Literary Gazette." "We were," he says, "at that time, more capable than we now are of poetic enthusiasm; and certainly that enthusiasm we not only felt ourselves, but we shared with every second person we then met. We were young, and at college, lavishing our golden years, not so much on the Greek verse and mystic character to which we ought, perhaps, to have been rigidly devoted, as

'Our heart in passion, and our head in rhyme.'

At that time poetry was not yet out of fashion, at least with us of the cloister; and there was always in the reading-room of the Union a rush every Saturday afternoon for the 'Literary Gazette;' and an impatient anxiety to hasten at once to that corner of the sheet which contained the three magical letters 'L. E. L.' And all of us praised the verse, and all of us guessed at the author. We soon learned it was a female, and our admiration was doubled, and our conjectures tripled. Was she young? Was she pretty? And—for there were some embryo fortune-hunters among us—was

she rich? We ourselves who, now staid critics and sober gentlemen, are about coldly to measure to a prose work [what is here quoted is introductory to a review of Romance and Reality,] the due quantum of laud and censure, then only thought of homage, and in verse only we condescended to yield it. But the other day, in looking over some of our boyish effusions, we found a paper superscribed to L. E. L., and beginning with 'Fair spirit!' "

In this place, perhaps, it may be fitting to glance at one important characteristic of her writings, previous to the consideration of those maturer poems, the earliest of which, now on the eve of appearance, procured for her such deserved distinction. In the poetry of L. E. L., even at this early and happy period of her career, assuming that it has now in reality commenced, we detect, not unfrequently, examples of that which afterwards cast a gloom over so much that she wrote, and was so justly complained of by those who took the deepest interest in the progress of her talents and reputation. The verses even of her gay and eager youth abound in distrusting views of life, in melancholy forebodings, and images of weariness and despondency. Whatever the subject of the song, baffled hopes and blighted affections would evermore thrust themselves between the singer and the light; and if they were not always

seized upon as the theme, they were unfailingly associated with it, and introduced in the way of illustration or analogy. And here it may be desirable at once to impress upon the reader's mind the fact, that there was not the remotest connection or affinity, not indeed a colour of resemblance, between her every-day life or habitual feelings, and the shapes they were made to assume in her poetry. No two persons could be less like each other in all that related to the contemplation of the actual world, than "L. E. L." and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. People would in this, as in so many other cases, forgetting one of the licences of poetry, identify the poet's history in the poet's subject and sentiments, and they accordingly insisted that, because the strain was tender and mournful, the heart of the minstrel was breaking. Certain it is, that L. E. L.'s naturally sweet and cheerful disposition was not, at this time, soured or obscured by any meditations upon life and the things most worth living for, which a lavish and rapturous indulgence of the poetic mood could lead her into; and however she may have merited admiration, she had no original claim to sympathy as a victim to constitutional morbidness. While every chord of her lute seemed to awaken a thousand plaintive and painful memories, she was storing up just as many lively recollections; and as the melancholy of her song moved numberless hearts

towards her, her own was only moved by the same process still farther than ever out of melancholy's reach. Her imagination would conjure up a scene in which, as was said of the *Urn Burial*, the gayest thing you should see would be a gilt coffin-nail; and this scene she would fancifully confound for the time being with human life, past, present, or to come; but the pen once out of her hand, there was no more sturdy questioner, not to say repudiator, of her own doctrines, than her own practice. The spectres she had conjured up vanished as the wand dropped from her hand. Five minutes after the composition of some poem full of passionate sorrow, or bitter disappointment and reproach, she would be seen again in the very mood out of which she had been carried by the poetic frenzy that had seized her—a state of mind the most frank, affectionate and enjoying—self-relying, but equally willing to share in the simple amusements that might be presented, or to employ its own resources for the entertainment of others.

A letter, which must have been written towards the close of 1820, while L. E. L. was yet in Gloucestershire, will serve to show how early she was accustomed to give her thoughts the gloomiest and most unreal colouring when finding expression in verse. It is addressed to her mother.

"At present," she says, "all I have to say is, that I do so long to see you all, that I like my aunt

more and more, that nothing can be pleasanter than my visit to Castle-end, and that I only wish you were in as agreeable a place. I have but one cause of complaint—I so seldom hear from any of you. As for my cousin, if I did not know her too well, I should take it for granted she had forgotten me. You cannot think how delightful a letter is—it makes me quite happy for three days. The following lines I wrote last night—I send them, as they are addressed to you.

'I will not say, I fear your absent one
Will be forgotten, but you cannot feel
The sickening thoughts that o'er the spirit steal
When I remember I am quite alone.
That all I loved most fondly, all are gone.
To you that deepest sorrow is unknown;
Some very dear ones are beside you now;
But cold to me each smile that meets my own;
It does not beam upon some long-loved brow.
'Tis vain to tell me we again shall meet,
That thought but makes the weary hours depart
More slowly; hope is tedious to the heart
When we so oft its accents must repeat.
Absence is to affection, as the hour
Of winter's chilling blight upon the spring's young flower.'

"I have now," proceeds the letter, "entirely lost my former passion for travelling. If I am so tired of what can scarcely be called a long journey, what should I do in my *intended travels through Africa!* I have not written to you since you enclosed Mr. Jerdan's note. How happy I am! it

so far surpasses my expectations, convinced as I am that a kind of curse hangs over us all; it seemed too delightful to happen to one of the Cahets. . . . To say the truth, I had thought so much about the poem, that I had got quite tired of it, and at last sent it in a fit of despair. So favourable a verdict again revived the spirit of exertion. I had, indeed, compounded a miserable essence for expectation—it might have been styled intrusion, presumption, or, to sum up in a word, it might have been good for nothing. The poem I took with me to Clifton, intending to finish it, I quarrelled with and burnt. This one has been entirely written since I was there, and is now completely terminated.—'My task is ended now.' . . . . I have made your purse scarlet. I think, though, they say green is the colour of hope; it has been an unlucky colour to us, for how fond we all were of it! . . . My aunt is really a delightful person—so good-natured, lets me do just as I please; I dont wonder they all like her so much. When do you *think* of moving? Once together again, and I care not for anything. . . . I think you will smile when I tell you I often spend an evening engaged in a sober rubber at whist."

The contrast between the tone of this letter, and that of the lines enclosed in it, is apparent. It forms the distinction between reality and romance. In prose, the writer only wishes her mother "were in as agreeable a place;" in poetry, she is "con-

sumed by sickening thoughts" that steal over her as she remembers she is "quite alone." As a matter of fact she states, that her aunt, whom she likes more and more, is "delightful and good-natured, allowing her to do just as she pleases;" but as a matter of fiction she declares, that "all she loved most fondly, all are gone"—that she is quite solitary and ever sorrowful. The reality asserts "that nothing can be pleasanter than her visit to Castle-end," and the romance insists that "cold is every smile" which meets hers. How far poetry may require these convenient sacrifices of fact, is a question it would be idle to discuss; nor is it here maintained that the habit was at all peculiar to L. E. L. What is required to be conceded, is simply, that the habit was hers; that she less frequently aimed at expressing in her poetry her own actual feelings and opinions, than at assuming a character for the sake of a certain kind of effect, and throwing her thickly-thronging ideas together with the most passionate force, and in the most picturesque forms. Sorrow and suspicion, pining regrets for the past, anguish for the present, and morbid predictions for the future, were, in L. E. L., not moral characteristics, but merely literary resources. The wounded spirit and the worm that never dies were often but terms of art, or means to an end. This admitted, there is little of contradiction to be accounted for, and few mysteries of character to clear up.

1824 to 1830.

In the month of July, 1824, after several unsuccessful negotiations with other publishers, "The Improvvisatrice and other poems, by L. E. L.," was published by Messrs. Hurst and Robinson. The principal poem was scarcely more than fifteen hundred lines in length, but the volume extended to upwards of three hundred and twenty pages. It was a book of beauty in every sense, and enjoyed a fate not always accorded to volumes of poetry that are ardently admired—it was as eagerly bought. Its success, as far as sale was concerned, was unequivocal on the first day of publication.

The stamp of originality was on this work. Almost as thickly sown with blemishes as with beauties—faulty to an extent that must have made the cold-natured and cynical critic felicitate himself as at the spreading of a feast—the fruit of wild and unpausing feelings that "would not be commanded"—there was still the stamp of originality upon the work. There was a power in the pages that no carelessness could mar, no obscurity hide—and the power was the writer's own. Not only had her lyre borrowed no string from the elder poets; not only were its effects unweakened by imitative notes caught from the popular poetical writings

of the day, but it was just as impossible to trace in the character of her imagination and the peculiarities of her style, any resemblance to those qualities which had gained distinction for other gifted women—one of whom, Mrs. Hemans, had just preceded her in the acquisition of an honoured name.

The youth and sex of the writer constituted another charm of powerful effect. There was much, moreover, in the poem itself, connected with these, to interest and fascinate. The heroine of it was an improvvisatrice, youthful, impassioned, and gifted with glorious powers of song; and, although introduced as a daughter of Florence—

> ——————— "of that land
> Where the poet's lip and the painter's hand
> Are most divine"—

she might be even L. E. L. herself; for what were the multitude of songs she had been pouring out for three years past, but "improvisings?" and, as some forlorn hope or blighted affection was generally their theme, so was it here—the story of love and suffering, hope and despair, was but amplified and elevated; the "moral" was the same—

> "It was my evil star above,
> Not my sweet lute, that wrought me wrong;
> It was not song that taught me love,
> But it was love that taught me song."

And thus, though it was but Sappho who sang, Sappho and L. E. L. were voted to be one, and the minstrel was identified as a martyr to ill-starred passion and blighted hope.

The assertion that many of L. E. L.'s songs were simply "improvisings," may almost be taken in a literal sense. An example is supplied in one of the minor pieces that fill up this volume—the sketch of "St. George's Hospital." It was long ago pointed out to us as an instance of the ease with which her fancy applied itself to any subject, and of the rapidity with which she embodied her ideas in verse. Passing the spot with a party of friends, she invited one of them to give her a subject for a sketch, and he carelessly suggested the hospital. Arrived at Brompton, the pen was put in action; and, in a space of time that seemed scarcely sufficient for transcribing the lines legibly, that beautiful set of pictures was produced. Her thoughts always flowed faster than she could put them upon paper; and of many of her fragments and sketches, as of the above, it may be said, that it would take her just as long to copy, as to compose them.

Nobody will deny that this proved, in numberless instances, a fatal facility. Here and there a stanza may have been improvised with advantage; many lines together, nay, whole pieces may be shown, which, written off as fast as the fingers could

move, no study could have very materially improved. But these were the exceptions. The injury that resulted from the rule of rapidity—breathless and reckless rapidity—is shown throughout the various poems that compose the overwrought richness, the beautiful excess, the melodious confusion of the "Improvvisatrice." If the superfluities, amounting to at least one-third of the poem, had been cut away, all that is obscure would have been clear—all that is languid, strong—all that is incongruous, harmonized. But let this, at the same time, be borne in mind, that L. E. L. is not, even in her earlier poems, chargeable with having used two words where one would do; she only sinned in employing two ideas, or three, where one was enough. It is true, she often marred a fine thought by a careless and inexact expression; but more frequently she destroyed the effect of a fine thought by profusely heaping others upon it, until she buried her nightingale in roses.

It would be an endless task to recount the instances of personal tribute and congratulation from those whose "breath is renown," which this production won for its delighted author. Enough, that the public was her patron; that several editions were rapidly sold; and that the tide of fortune began to flow in with that of fame. But not a day did she allow herself to pause in the enjoyment of these new delights, and the advantages

they were bringing to those of whom she always thought more than of herself. Her imagination would know no rest. Her weekly contributions of sketch and song were continued with unabated freshness and vigour; amidst feelings, kindled by the success of her work, which she afterwards touchingly described—

——— "If ever happiness
In its most passionate excess
Offered its wine to human lip,
It has been mine that cup to sip.
I may not say with what deep dread
The words of my first song were said;
I may not say what deep delight
Has been upon my minstrel flight.
Thanks to the gentleness that lent
My young lute such encouragement."

It incited her to another trial of it, for another poem was commenced before the close of the year.

The progress of this new work was, however, interrupted by an event not wholly unlooked-for, but for which a heart so filially attached as hers could never be thoroughly prepared. Hitherto, L. E. L. had resided under her father's roof, excepting only during an interval of a year or two passed with her grandmother in Sloane-street, or spent in visits to other members of the family. Now, however, in the midst of her success, and in the freshness of her yet brighter hope, it was her

misfortune to be deprived of her beloved parent; of him, whom to please was the first desire of her heart. Mr. Landon lived only long enough to witness the dawn of his daughter's literary fortune, and to hail in it, as he must have done, some consoling prospects of that advantage and succour to the objects bereft of his protection, which his own unprosperous enterprises in later years had rendered so necessary.

The poem was, after a while, proceeded with; and its loveliest passages are evidences that she had sought and found, among the shadows of melancholy beauty, and the images of gentleness and peace which many of the subjects selected for illustration suggested to her, that balm for hurt minds which her own so much required: the poem closes with a tribute to the revered dead, which is one gush of exquisite and unextinguishable affection.

——— "My heart said, no name but Thine
Should be on this last page of mine.
My father! though no more thine ear
Censure or praise of mine can hear.
It soothes me to embalm thy name
With all my hope, my pride, my fame!

* * * * *

Alas! the tears that still will fall,
Are selfish in their fond recal.
If ever tears could win from Heaven
A loved one, and yet be forgiven,
Mine surely might! * * *

My own dead father, time may bring
Chance, change, upon his rainbow-wing;
But never will thy name depart—
The household god of thy child's heart,
Until thy orphan girl may share
The grave where her best feelings are.
Never, dear father, love can be
Like the dear love I had for thee."

These are among the closing lines of "The Troubadour," to which were added, "Poetical Sketches of Modern Pictures, and Historical Sketches," forming a volume, published by Hurst and Co., in July, 1825. This poem is of considerable length, and is divided into four cantos. The festival of the Golden Violet, which, at Toulouse, in the 14th century, was appointed for the bestowal of the prize due to the Troubadour victor, suggested the subject; and the hero of it, Raymond, figures bravely and brilliantly in all the honours that a mastery in love, and war, and minstrelsy, may confer upon him, until he wins from the hand of his fair mistress, who is queen of the floral games, the prize of the Golden Violet. In this subject we have some spirited descriptions of scenes where—

"With the lightning's speed, the thunder's peal,
Flashes the lance and strikes the steel;"

in contrast with the most lovely, or the most gorgeous pictures of fair gardens and gay pavilions;

then, again, bursts of wildest passion and bitterest grief, succeeded by such touches of sweet and natural feeling, that the heart is lulled, and the ear scarcely heeds the faltering measure and the jagged verse—

> "Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh."

It is noticeable that, in her picture of the Troubadour, L. E. L. describes, what she could not yet have experienced, the insufficiency of a fair fame fairly won to atone for the evils of sacrificed repose, of unambitious dreams dispelled, of privacy invaded, of the cold sneer, the envious tongue, the heart-searing slander. The wreath of song, she says,—

> "Though seemingly all bloom and light,
> Hides thorn and canker, worm and blight.
> Mocking will greet, neglect will chill
> His spirit's gush, his bosom's thrill;
> And, worst of all, that heartless praise
> Echoed from what another says."

The poet, she assures us,

> "But dreams a dream of life and light,
> And grasps the rainbow, that appears
> Afar all beautiful and bright
> And finds it only form'd of tears."

The end of the adventure being invariably and inevitably,

" To sigh for all the toil, the care,
The wrong which he has had to bear."

This was written shortly after the death of Lord Byron, and expresses nothing more than that sympathy which a spirit so imaginative, and a temper so generous as hers, must necessarily have felt, with the wrongs and sufferings, real and unreal, of that extraordinary person. But L. E. L. was soon admitted to a full and most keen experience of some of the wrongs she so touchingly associates with the attainment of poetic honours. Of this presently. In the meantime, with the remark that the success of the "Troubadour," with respect both to fame and fortune, equalled her highest hopes, let us turn to another subject.

The Christmas of this year, 1825, L. E. L. spent at the house of her uncle, the Rev. James Landon, at Aberford, near Wetherby, in Yorkshire. One of the friends with whom she was always most delighted to correspond was, just at that period, making a first appearance in the "atmosphere of authorship;" and the occasion called forth a letter, which, though written in a vein of the liveliest and most playful humour, expresses some sentiments which she very seriously entertained. To read this is to have a pretty correct idea of her conversation taken down in short-hand.

"Ten thousand congratulations to myself, the reproach is taken away from Israel. My dearest Mrs.

Thomson, your appearance in the atmosphere of authorship is a consummation devoutly to be wished by all who have the good name of their profession at heart. I shall think of my calling, 'my shame in crowds,' with somewhat of complacency, when I can call up your image, instead of visions of longitude in blue, and latitude in yellow. Already I see you a regular lioness. 'Have you got Mrs. Thomson's autograph? I am sure you will be at my party when I tell you Mrs. Thomson is to be there—she is the great historianess, a most charming, delightful woman.' 'Good gracious! can that be an authoress?' 'Why, dear me, ma'am, she has such a fine family!' How cordially, sincerely, affectionately do I wish and expect for your work the most brilliant success. May the Grand Turk read it as a matrimonial lesson,* the Mogul take the thousandth edition for himself, and the Emperor of all the Russias implore the honours of its dedication.

"Many thanks for your letter. I take the opposite of your position, and say the country is the place for reading letters; I know your's by heart. I, too, have been dining out; *au premier*, I did 'Miss,' very prettily, and a good-natured old lady—who put me in mind of a tun, or a lady and gentleman 'rolled into one,' having the height of one sex, the

* The work was the "Memoirs of the Court of Henry VIII."

breadth of the other—gave me a book of pictures, a stool, and a little table. *Au second*, it was properly disseminated that I was 'the London Authoress.' The consequence was, that, seated by the only young man I had beheld, I acted upon him like an air-pump, suspending his very breath and motion; and my asking him for a mince-pie, a dish of which I had been for some time surveying with longing eyes, acted like an electric shock—and his start not a little discomposed a no-age-at-all, silk-vested spinster, whose plate was thereby deposited in her lap—and last not least, in the hurry, he forgot to help me!

"My dear madam, I can forgive (I can do no more) your liking the country in preference to London. Both yourself and Mr. Thomson passed your childhood there; and I believe, like the absolute necessity of wigs for the bishops and judges, there is an absolute belief in the enjoyments of childhood; though, in my particularly private opinion, these reminiscences are but of triangular caps, certain donations on the right or left ear, as was most convenient, verbs, *graphies*, and, climax of intellectual misery, the multiplication-table! Be this as it may, it is my firm belief that the softened remembrance of these said scenes has thrown a poetical halo round the country, that it is only because you are not there which makes it so desirable to you. Nothing, I grant, can be more

luxurious than the gush of fresh air, the sweep of green fields, the fine old trees and the twilight of summer; but it is coming from streets, it is the very knowledge that your pleasure is passing as you enjoy it, that makes a month or two in the country so delightful. But *toujours perdrix!* the very poetry of Surrey's beautiful landscapes would become prose in time. As for social intercourse there is none. I grant you a round of magnificent dinners—I allow the excellence of the champagne, the ices, the pine apples—I can stare at the gold and silver plate till I pine to pawn it—but for real enjoyment give me one day such as I have spent at your house. I grant that in the country nothing seems easier than to become the golden calf of a circle, but I never envied Miss Seward.

"No; 'London, my country, city of the soul,' I am content to dwell for aye with thee. I, however, cordially agree in one of your favourite opinions, the happiness of being one of a large family. There is certainly something very delightful in being the object of affectionate solicitude to many, bound in every tie of habit and relationship. . . . I should like you to know my aunt, I think you would be so much pleased with her. . . . You must summon philosophy and the haberdasher to your aid, for gloves of mine, here at least, you will never get. *En passant*, I have heard most ludicrous accounts of my achievements in that way. One young lady

heard at Scarborough last summer, that I had had two hundred offers; and a gentleman at Leeds brought an account of three hundred and fifty straight from London. It is really very unfortunate that my conquests should so much resemble the passage to the North Pole and Wordsworth's Cuckoo, 'talked of but never seen.' . . . Since the first page of this was written, I have seen York Cathedral—it is a glorious place. The feeling on entering it is worth a whole month of common existence. I only longed to assassinate the guide who kept talking of feet and inches."

The next letter which L. E. L. addressed to Mrs. Thomson is in painful contrast with that which has just been transcribed. The subject of it is here adverted to with a reluctance which will at least ensure brevity. At the very moment when the hopes of a friend's success in a first literary enterprise were thus inspiring her even to gaiety, jealousy and calumny were busy with her own name. Nobody can make many friends without making some enemies. L. E. L.'s foes comprised perhaps various persons who, dispraised in the journal to which she was so valued and constant a contributor, associated the critic's opinions with hers; while others might as erroneously assign to her influence the rejection of their communications. To these must be added a third class, not a numerous, but a very active one, who never forgive success.

Hence the first motive for detraction, which broke out in bitter ridicule of her writings, and then proceeded to the vilest misrepresentation of her conduct. What malignity begins, ignorant, idle, sometimes even well-meaning gossip, finishes. Those who professed to know nothing about her, aided by their silly curiosity the insidious objects of those who might falsely pretend to know. Unfortunately, the very unguardedness of her innocence served to arm even the feeblest malice with powerful stings; the openness of her nature, and the frankness of her manners, furnished the silly or the ill-natured with abundant materials for gossip. She was always as careless as a child of set forms and rules for conduct. She had no thought, no concern about the interpretation that was likely to be put upon her words, by at least one out of a score of listeners—it was enough for her that she meant no harm, and that the friends she most valued knew this—perhaps she found a wilful and most dangerous pleasure, sometimes, in making the starers stare yet more widely. She defied suspicion. But to induce her to condescend to be on her guard, to put the slightest restraint upon her speech, correspondence, or actions, simply because self-interest demanded it to save her conduct from misrepresentation, was a task which, so far from any one being able to accomplish, few would, without deliberation, venture to attempt; so quick

were her feelings, so lofty her woman's pride, and so keen and all-sufficing her consciousness of right.

By no one could this grave and delicate duty have been more properly discharged than by the friend to whom the preceding letter was addressed. Mrs. Thomson had known L. E. L. and her family for years. Dr. Antony Todd Thomson had been her medical attendant from her girlish days—both had been in the most friendly and cordial intimacy with her—so that it might almost be said she had been rarely out of their sight. Mrs. Thomson's high sense of moral rectitude—and not that only, but her clear perception of the nicer proprieties demanded by conventional prejudice—her intellectual qualifications, and the position she occupied—pointed her out as the friend from whom might best come some necessary hints at the existence of the scandal that had been diffused, and such advice as one woman may give to another without addressing to her an arrogant lecture on self-government. Of the just application of the solicitude and affection that were thus shown, the following letter, written in June, 1826, is at once the proof and the recompense.

"I have not written so soon as I intended, my dear Mrs. Thomson, first because I wished to be able to tell you I had taken some steps towards change; and I also wished, if possible, to subdue

the bitterness and indignation of feelings not to be expressed to one so kind as yourself. I must own I have succeeded better in the first than the last. I think of the treatment I have received until my very soul writhes under the powerlessness of its anger. It is only because I am poor, unprotected, and dependant on popularity, that I am a mark for all the gratuitous insolence and malice of idleness and ill-nature. And I cannot but feel deeply that had I been possessed of rank and opulence, either these remarks had never been made, or if they had, how trivial would their consequence have been to me. I must begin with the only subject—the only thing in the world I really feel an interest in—my writings. It is not vanity when I say, their success is their fault. When my 'Improvvisatrice' came out, nobody discovered what is now alleged against it. I did not take up a review, a magazine, a newspaper, but if it named my book it was to praise 'the delicacy,' 'the grace,' 'the purity of feminine feeling' it displayed. . . . . But success is an offence not to be forgiven. To every petty author, whose works have scarce made his name valuable as an autograph, or whose unsold editions load his bookseller's shelves—I am a subject of envy—and what is envy but a name for hatred? With regard to the immoral and improper tendency of my productions, I can only say it is not my fault if there are minds which, like

negroes, cast a dark shadow on a mirror, however clear and pure in itself. You must forgive this; I do not often speak of my own works, and I may say this is the first time it was ever done boastingly; but I must be allowed to place the opinions of the many in opposition to the envious and illiberal cavillings of a few.

"As to the *report* you named, I know not which is greatest—the absurdity or the malice. Circumstances have made me very much indebted to the gentleman [whose name was coupled with hers], for much of kindness. I have not had a friend in the world but himself to manage anything of business, whether literary or pecuniary. Your own literary pursuits must have taught you how little, in them, a young woman can do without assistance. Place yourself in my situation. Could you have hunted London for a publisher, endured all the alternate hot and cold water thrown on your exertions; bargained for what sum they might be pleased to give; and, after all, canvassed, examined, nay quarrelled over accounts the most intricate in the world? And again, after success had procured money, what was I to do with it? Though ignorant of business, I must know I could not lock it up in a box. Then, for literary assistance, my proof sheets could not go through the press without revision. Who was to undertake this—I can only call it drudgery—but some one to whom my literary exertions could

in return be as valuable as theirs to me? But it is not on this ground that I express my surprise at so cruel a calumny, but actually on that of our slight intercourse. He is in the habit of frequently calling on his way into town, and unless it is on a Sunday afternoon, which is almost his only leisure time for looking over letters, manuscripts, &c., five or ten minutes is the usual time of his visit. We visit in such different circles, that if I except the evening he took Agnes and myself to Miss B——'s, I cannot recal our ever meeting in any one of the round of winter parties. The more I think of my past life, and of my future prospects, the more dreary do they seem. I have known little else than privation, disappointment, unkindness, and harassment; from the time I was fifteen, my life has been one continual struggle in some shape or another against absolute poverty, and I must say not a tithe of my profits have I ever expended on myself. And here I cannot but allude to the remarks on my dress. It is easy for those whose only trouble on that head is change, to find fault with one who never in her life knew what it was to have two new dresses at a time. No one knows but myself what I have had to contend with—but this is what I have no right to trouble you with."

These were her real feelings expressed to a real friend. Her acquaintances knew nothing of them;

the world saw no change in her; for in no one respect could she be persuaded to put a curb upon her high spirit, to substitute reflection for impulse, or to set a guard over the free expression of her thoughts and opinions. She could not, however, at this time, surmise the whole baseness of the scandal. The knowledge of it was reserved for after years, when, her life and manners continuing what they had ever been, but the evil report never utterly silenced, it was discovered that a silent disdain of calumny is not always the best wisdom in the slandered; nor a reliance upon time and innocence for justice, the truest delicacy in an adviser. It was L.E.L.'s fate to suffer deeply during many after years of her life, from her own high-minded indifference to false reports, and her resolution to wear no false manner at any time. How pitiful and base if a shadow were to be cast on the name she has left, or her character were still exposed to the slightest misconception, by any false delicacy to the living, or any flinching from the truth, however painful, on the part of one whom she had in solemn terms charged with the task of recording the successes and sorrows of her life. It is therefore, that the writer feels it to be a duty thus to advert to the slander, and thus to record the reply.

How deep was the shock her feelings sustained, her own words show. It would be in vain, per-

haps, to speculate upon the duration of that bitterness and gloom which pervade the above transcript of her feelings; but the evil effect was certainly not of brief continuance, and, perhaps, from this time her real sentiments towards society, and her philosophical speculations on life, whether expressed in her correspondence or conversation, partook far more of the morbid, despairing, and desolate tone of her poetry than before. In her next letter to the same friend (dated a month afterwards from Aberford, whither she had again gone on a visit to her uncle James), the usual playful humour is dashed with excessive bitterness; and this mixture of the gentle and violent, the amiable and the scornful—a mingling of so much that was good with so dreary a disbelief in goodness—so that it often seemed to be wilful, and adopted for the mere sake of paradox—continued to be characteristic of her in her later life.

"I had intended, my dear Mrs. Thomson, taking my chance of spending Monday evening with you, but my cousin's return home with me, and the beneficial effect of leaving everything to the last, prevented my going out. So I must begin my letter by bidding you most affectionately 'good bye,' with far more sincerity than those words generally convey. For my own part, in making my round of calls, I thought 'my friends' had entered into a conspiracy to wish me health and

happiness in the set-terms of the polite letter-writer. After all, though I know you will not allow it, there is something very independent in this indifference.

> 'There were no tears at parting shed;
> There were no eyes to shed them.'

I kept lamenting that I had not gone by sea. Who is it that says a happy quotation is a sudden treasure? I might have applied Lord Byron's lines so well,—'With thee, my barque,' &c.—I had a most uncommonly pleasant journey down. Of my three companions, one was a middle-aged and middle-sized man, who alternately slept and steamed; the second may be emphatically described as a nobody, a young gentleman with red whiskers, very hot for this weather; but the third was an exceedingly gentlemanly and intelligent man, with, however, one fault, or rather misfortune, he was married—or I should have tried for a conquest.—It was to me something very amusing, and very new, (one grand half of amusement), to converse with a well-informed person, possessing a very proper appreciation, as Miss —— would say, of my being a very superior sort of person, and yet not having the slightest idea of my original sin, no thought of my taint of blue, no battery of looks erected against me. O for oblivion, and five hundred a year!—Not being now writing in the way

of business, I shall spare you the flowers I have gathered, the trees I have seen, leaving you to *beau-idealize* them for yourself in Fate's garden. . . . This is not a gay time in the country, but prospects of future pleasure are dancing before me. I have invitations for Harrowgate and Scarborough, nay, a distant peep at Scotland. I am just in the humour in which tours are made, leaving no place with regret, and looking forward to none with greater pleasure than curiosity and change. Were I rich, 'I'd make a tour, and then I'd write it.' I think I could write a most delightful 'journey of a genius.' I would confine myself to portrait-painting. Altered as I am in tastes, feelings (if I have any), I must say I retain my old admiration for my aunt. She is a most delightful woman. Her powers of conversation are very great. I keep thinking, 'oh dear! what would she not be in London!' I yesterday had a drive with my uncle to (to my taste) the prettiest place about; we drank tea, and afterwards, walking through the grounds, I was shown a tree that had been, two days before, struck by the lightning. It was turned to the most beautiful pink inside and out, for when cut down, all the sap was pink. I wish I could learn if this is at all a known circumstance. What a simile! If any misfortunes happen, I beg I may hear of them; as to any good fortune, as I am perfectly sure it will not concern me,

you may keep it a fountain sealed, for I am grown very envious. I am very comfortable here. I cannot, though I wish, be insensible to so much affectionate kindness; . . . . but after all, what is affection, but another of those 'cheats which make present life distasteful to us by comparison with the future?"

The next letter to Mrs. Thomson, dated three weeks afterwards (ever reckoning by post-marks), contradicts this fearful sentiment; or, at least, its writer shews that if affection be a cheat, in her it only exercised its dishonesty to cheat those she loved out of their troubles; for the letter is written expressly to amuse a sick friend, and is well adapted for the purpose, being lively throughout, with but one mocking allusion to her own want of sensibility.

. . . "I am not going to write an epistle of condolence. It is one half of a Job's comforter to put people in mind of their misfortunes. If I can entertain you for five minutes I do more good than all the pity in the world, and you need not read unless disposed. I have been both bodily and intellectually industrious. I have written poetry "by the pound;" I have eaten fruit enough to stock a stall in Covent-garden. I have walked through green lanes, picturesque fields, &c. till I have worn out two pair of shoes, and began to wish I were an Arabian beauty, a load for a camel, and not ex-

pected to move without the assistance of two slaves. I have learned to tat, worked — yes, actually finished a lace-collar; and most commendably too, began a flounce from which I have no few dreams of future glory. I was at Leeds yesterday, 'a town o'er which a curse is laid.' Cockney as I am, I had no idea of such a sky. My remark was, what a tremendous storm is gathering!

> 'So darkly gloom'd the thunder-cloud
> Upon the distant hill.'

I do not know whether there is actually *any* sky above the town or not, but you see nothing but clouds of smoke forming the atmosphere. The interior improves. The principal street is really a noble one, and some of the shops made me most sentimentally recal the glories of Bond-street. But there is one shop, 'the most alluring one by far,' in which London stands unrivalled. The taste, the intellect displayed in her pastry-cook shops, place her country competitors at an immeasurable distance. I have entered on my journal—Leeds pastry-cooks one thousand and one years behind in civilization. Albeit, you see ribbons, gauzes, silks, satins, like moving rainbows in the streets, the people have a very plebeian appearance. I was particularly struck with this at their exhibition, which is very superior to what you would expect a provincial one to be. There are some fine old pictures

sent by the neighbouring gentlemen; some good modern ones from London, and some exhibited by young artists in this part of the country, very promising indeed. The portraits are what portraits usually are, 'tiresome takings of a foolish face.' Painters might exclaim with the author of "*Rouge et Noir*," on seeing his fair, alias pale, alias yellow, or *tout-ensemble* sea-sick countrywomen land at Calais—

> 'Now, by St. George on horseback! one would think
> The ugliest come on purpose to disgrace us.'

There is a fine collection of pictures at ——, which is also a most beautiful place, formerly a preceptory of the Templars, with some curious antiquarian remains, but invisible to common eyes, the Marchioness of H—— being at present there lamenting her hard fate, and the utter inability to live on six-and-thirty thousand a year. To our left is a place belonging to Mr. ——, noticeable as a woman-hater. Not so much as a foolish fat scullion will he suffer in his house. Even the white window-curtains were taken down as bearing too much resemblance to female drapery. For every why there is a wherefore; *et voici le fait;* he formed an early attachment to a very beautiful girl, much his inferior in fortune; he was sent abroad, but continued most romantically constant. As soon as his father's death made him master of a noble estate, he married her. Two months after their marriage she ran

away with his most intimate friend whom she had known a fortnight.—A heavy misfortune befel me the other day—one of those misfortunes which really do affect my feelings. I was ruralizing, was caught in a violent rain, and my bonnet, my best bonnet, new trimmed, was utterly hopelessly spoilt; and what was worse, my beauty, if I have any; for I caught cold, and had a great gathering in my left eye, which besides being very painful, gave me a most pugilistic appearance. I arranged a black silk handkerchief as well as I could over the poulticed side, but, alas! it did not at all resemble

> ——— 'the mask which shades
> The face of young Arabian maids,
> A mask which leaves the one eye free
> To do its best in witchery.'"

The following reports her literary progress, on the completion of another poem, the "Golden Violet." The letter was written at the close of October of the same year, from Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire, where she was staying for a short period with some retired friends.

"Had I any intention of setting up for epistolary fame, which, however, both Heaven and I know is not in my way, I should rest my gilt-paper-and-red-seal immortality on this present letter, for it has the mark of the beast—that is to say, is written from the most selfish motives, expressly for my own amusement. I have travelled

some miles since I last wrote, from Aberford to Royston, in the mail, in company with a ponderous and somniferous noun masculine, a smart-looking adjective feminine, whether a superintendant of curls or children, letters or lace, I could not determine. . . . You may guess we are very quiescent, and I am very glad of it, for of all lionization, country lionizing is my utter contempt. As soon as my 'Golden Violet' begins for me to realize its name, with what pleasure shall I pay the Jehu, guard, and hackney-coachman, that land me in Hans-place. St. Vitus!—being the most dissipated and dancing saint I can think of to invoke—it will not be my fault if I do not have a gay winter. Well, give me a metropolitan five hundred a-year in preference to a rural five thousand. Albeit, I don't do much description in general, I must favour you with a little in honour of the exceeding beauty of the lanes about here. Say what you will of a spring hedge, give me an autumn one; the first has only a few flowers, the latter is covered with fruit. They are now literally loaded, thousands of haws like coral, the bright scarlet heps, the deep purple of the sloes, and the shining black of the blackberries, are so richly relieved by the sycamore and ash, the one just touched with yellow, the other with red;—the gay ribbon repositories of Bond-street might take many a useful hint. They say every gastronomic hint is a white

line in the record of your life, and I have added to my list of delicacies, a branch of sloes roasted over a wood fire. I have been most edifyingly industrious; you who heard all of the 'Golden Violet' that was written, know how much I was behind hand—it is now completely finished, and I am equally busy with my 'Erinna.' I shall be so anxious for you and Mr. Thomson to like it. Is there not an old proverb which says, 'it is ill judging your own bigging?' Still, if I can write up to the idea I have formed, it must be a striking poem. Other poets have painted a very sufficient quantity of poetical miseries; but my aim is not to draw neglected genius, or 'mourn a laurel planted on the tomb'—but to trace the progress of a mind highly-gifted, well-rewarded, but finding the fame it won a sting and a sorrow, and finally sinking beneath the shadows of success. *Apropos des bottes*, I have purchased such a pretty straw bonnet for—but you must guess, when you see it."

Few readers of the poem ('Erinna') thus adverted to—a poem that formed one of the most striking features of the volume, published about two months afterwards, will hesitate to admit that L. E. L. did succeed in "writing up to the idea she had formed," and that thus the high aim was accomplished. In it she takes a lofty view of the poet's lot, entering into his feelings, painting his

visions that are realities, exhibiting the moods of his waywardness, and the vicissitudes of his course —delineating his purposes and his ambition—glorifying his strength, sympathizing with his weakness, and all in

"Language mysteriously musical;"

L. E. L. herself, the while, proving her own to be, indeed, the poet's true vocation, by employing her genius in

——— "giving flowers
A life as sweet, more lasting than their own."

But all these, the healthier and more cheerful parts of the poem, are heavily overshadowed by the spirit of the philosophy in which it is conceived; the thoughts are of a high cast, but chilling as the snows on the peaks of mountains; and the sweet and lovely images that cheer what else must be wholly desolate, breaking through the gloominess of the picture, are as lilies flung into a grave.

There are poems in the volume referred to, that, to a woman's grace, add a masculine energy. The "Golden Violet, with its tales of Chivalry and Romance," published by Messrs. Longman and Co., in December, 1826, comprises some of the best conceived and most finished of L. E. L.'s earlier compositions. This poem represents a different species of poetical competition for the prize

of the Golden Violet; and introduces the minstrels of various countries, with their ballads, tales, and romances, in every species of measure, singing and reciting on "the first-born day of loveliest May" for the beautiful flower of gold. The characters are various, the subjects fitting to them, the measure, in most instances, skilfully adapted to both. L. E. L.'s taste for the old ballad, and her love of the old romance, animated her here to excellent purpose; and catching, as she was sure to do, the true tone and spirit of the "lay and legend proper," she achieved also an unwonted felicity of construction and appropriateness of expression, in working out her many-storied subject. This volume, which, like the former two, was published at a price rather above than under the average, had an immediate and extensive sale.

Still she went writing on, romancing in verse, and reviewing, as we shall presently have to mention, in prose. Her next published volume was "The Venetian Bracelet, the Lost Pleiad, the History of the Lyre, and other Poems," issued by the same publishers, in October 1829. The fierce political contentions of the time were unfavourable to poetry such as hers; yet her sweet and sorrowful songs again found a fit audience. Her critics had not prevailed with her to take up other themes and other measures. The burthen of the strain was love, still love. To the complaint of monotony

in this respect, she pleasantly alludes in the introduction, and then vindicates herself by renewing the offence. We gather plainly from her remarks that if she herself were in love at the time, it was only with her subject, and that she considers herself exempt from the suspicion of being broken-hearted, by continually singing about those who are. Love, however, love foredoomed, love linked to woe and fated to death—the hopelessness of hope, the reality of pain, the mockery of life—were the prevailing topics.

> " How wildly round our ancient battlements
> The air-notes murmur ! Blent with such a wind
> I heard the song which shall be ours to-night.
> She had a strange sweet voice the maid who sang,
> But early death was pale upon her cheek;
> And she had melancholy thoughts that gave
> Their sadness to her speech ; she sat apart
> From all her young companions, in the shade
> Of an old tree—a gloomy tree, whose boughs
> Hung o'er her as a pall:—'twas omen-like,
> For she died young—of gradual decay,
> As if the heart consumed itself. None knew
> If she had loved ; but always did her song
> Dwell on love's sorrows."

No one who had ever caught a glimpse of the animated and joyous creature who thus sang, could have committed the error of identifying her with the love-lorn damsel she painted. The " Venetian Bracelet " is a pretty tale charmingly wrought into verse ; and the " Lost Pleiad " is a little mytho-

logical tragedy told in short, sparkling, and yet mournful numbers—dark as night, "but night with all her stars." The "History of the Lyre," has many passages of force and beauty, and some self-references mixed with their idealties. "Love," the Lyre's historian sings—

> "Love, which can resign
> Its own best happiness for one dear sake,
> Can bear with absence—hath no part in hope,
> For hope is somewhat selfish, love is not,
> And doth prefer another to itself."

Of such is the volume composed. The miscellaneous poems comprise many fine ones, and among them a tender and spirited dramatic scene. "Sometimes," sighs the poet over the song as she pours it forth—

> "I look round with vain regret,
> And think I will re-string my lute, and nerve
> My woman's hand for nobler enterprise;
> But the day never comes. Alas! we make
> A ladder of our thoughts where angels step,
> But sleep ourselves at the foot. Our high resolves
> Look down upon our slumbering acts."

Altogether, her poetry, up to this period, was too like the stream described in this volume—

> "A noble stream, which, unconfined,
> Makes fertile its rich banks, and glads the face
> Of nature round; but not so when its wave
> Is lost in artificial waterfalls
> And sparkling eddies; or cooped up to make
> The useless fountain of a palace-hall."

Writing verses was to her but a labour of love, if labour in any sense it could be called; it was far less irksome to her to compose a poem than to sit idle; and as she rarely looked about for choice subjects, but seized on those that first occurred to her, so she never waited for the "poetic fit," the "happy moment," but sat down to her desk in any mood, careless or solemn. Thus, it is not surprising that she was continually repeating herself in stanzas on memory and hope, and love and disappointment; nor is it strange, considering the activity, or rather the restlessness of her imagination, if the volumes which, up to this time, we have seen published in her name, formed but an inconsiderable portion of what she actually wrote. To the "Literary Gazette" she still continued a frequent contributor of poetical fragments; but her writings were far from being confined to those columns in which the initials of the poet were regularly sought. In the lighter departments of criticism, she was, week by week, a devoted labourer; and many are the authors, young and old, poets, novelists, dramatists, travellers, and reminiscence-mongers, who owe the first generous words of encouragement, or the cordial renewal of former welcomes, to her glowing and versatile pen. Written generally to suit the occasion merely, it is not thought worth while to make reference to these criticisms in detail; but it is due to L. E. L. to

say, that were her opinions upon books and authors, whether expressed in this or any other publication, impartially extracted, and collected in volumes, there would be seen in them the results of great miscellaneous reading, research in more than one foreign language, acuteness and brilliancy of remark—with, it is true, much hastiness of judgment, many prejudiced and inconclusive views, frequent wildness of assertion—but without one ungenerous or vindictive sentiment, one trace of an unkindly or interested feeling. She has often gone far out of her way to recommend to the public the productions of rivals who abused her; and assuredly, towards those by whom she conceived herself obliged though in the slightest degree, she was ever ready to play the friend where she should have been the critic only, and to repay with a column of praise the favour of a kind word—for the smallest service she always remembered and always over-rated. But here her sinnings against "impartial judgment" end. Her failings as a critic leaned to virtue's side; and the young writer, with but a spark of the poetic fire in his lines, was as sure of a gentle sentence, of appreciation and sympathy, as the established favourite was of a grateful welcome, and an honouring tribute.

In addition to these continued tasks, should be noticed her contributions to the "Annuals." From their commencement, a few years before, there was

scarcely one (although every season produced its new ones) that did not secure the attraction of her initials. From several of these, such as the "Literary Souvenir," the "Forget-me-Not," &c., she derived sums considerable enough to show that it was no immutable decree of fate by which poetry and poverty had been made inseparable companions, and that in the judgment of experienced publishers, her writings retained their charm over the gentle purchaser, in spite of their profusion.

Yet L. E. L. did not, therefore, become rich; though much of her literary labour was productive, she never knew how to hoard; and those she loved and respected always shared in her good fortune —it was in her troubles only that she allowed no one, if she could help it, to be a participator. The death of her father had but served to strengthen those maternal claims which (though even here calumny did not spare her) she ever esteemed sacred; nor could she forget that her brother, younger than herself, was equally destitute of parental aid; and, although he had been sent to Oxford by his uncle, there were still wants, which it was one of the delights of her existence to supply, as it is the affectionate pride of his (he wishes this to be said), to remember and acknowledge it.

1830 to 1834.

In a letter, which it will be necessary to introduce presently, L. E. L. remarks—"I have lived all my life since childhood with the same people. The Misses Lance were strict, scrupulous, and particular; moreover, from having kept a school so long, with habits of minute observation. The affection they feel for me can hardly be undeserved. I would desire nothing more than to refer to their opinion." Under the roof of these respectable ladies she had been long residing. In her conduct and manners there had never been the slightest change. She pursued her literary tasks with unabated spirit; and though precluded, by her unprotected position, from going into society to the extent of the facilities created for her, she was yet enabled so far to extend the circle of her friends as to secure, by a short visit here and there, and by literary acquaintanceship, a fair share of relief from the monotony of her pursuits.

Nobody who might happen to see her for the first time about this period, enjoying the little quiet dance (of which she was fond), or the snug corner of the room where the little lively discussion (which she liked still better) was going on, could possibly have traced in her one feature of the Sentimentalist

which popular error reputed her to be. The listener might only hear her running on from subject to subject, and lighting up each with a wit never ill-natured, and often brilliant—scattering quotations as thick as hail—opinions as wild as the winds —defying fair argument to keep pace with her, and fairly talking herself out of breath. He would most probably hear from her lips many a pointed and sparkling aphorism, the wittiest things of the night, let who might be around her—he would be surprised, pleased; but his heroine of song, as painted by anticipation, he would be unable to discover. He would see her looking younger than she really was; and perhaps, struck by her animated air, her expressive face, and her slight but elegant figure, his impression would at once find utterance in the exclamation which a year or two afterwards escaped from the lips of the Ettrick Shepherd, on being first presented to her whose romantic fancies had often charmed him in the wild mountains—"Hey! but I did na think ye'd been sae bonnie!"—staring at the same time with all a poet's capacity of eye.*

Without attempting an elaborate description of

* Mrs. Hall's recollection of the scene, which took place at her house, is, that he said, taking L. E. L.'s hand, and looking earnestly in her face—"Oh dear! I ha' written and thought many a bitter thing about ye, but I'll do sae na mair; I did na think ye'd been sae bonny."

the personal appearance of L. E. L., we cite this expression of surprise as some indication that she was far prettier than report allowed her to be, at the period we are speaking of: and never perhaps did she look better than about this time. Her easy carriage and careless movements would seem to imply an insensibility to the feminine passion for dress; yet she had a proper sense of it, and never disdained the foreign aid of ornament, always provided it was simple, quiet, and becoming. Her hair was "darkly brown," very soft and beautiful, and always tastefully arranged; her figure, as before remarked, slight, but well formed and graceful; her feet small, but her hands especially so, and faultlessly white and finely shaped; her fingers were fairy fingers; her ears, also, were observably little. Her face, though not regular in "every feature," became beautiful by expression; every flash of thought, every change and colour of feeling, lightened over it as she spoke, when she spoke earnestly. The forehead was not high, but broad and full; the eyes had no overpowering brilliancy, but their clear intellectual light penetrated by its exquisite softness; her mouth was not less marked by character, and, besides the glorious faculty of uttering the pearls and diamonds of fancy and wit, knew how to express scorn, or anger, or pride, as well as it knew how to smile winningly, or to pour forth those short, quick, ringing laughs, which, not ex-

cepting even her *bon-mots* and aphorisms, were the most delightful things that issued from it.

To judge of her powers of conversation, it is necessary to consider, not only the qualities already referred to, but her extraordinary memory, and the stores of information and anecdote which an unwearied and diversified course of reading, during many years, had placed at her command. We have seen nothing of the progress of L. E. L.'s acquirements since her childish pursuits came to an end, and the family left Trevor-park; and indeed it would be no easy task to trace her studies in regular order, or to point out the sources of her extensive and varied knowledge. She often exhibited an acquaintance with books which could hardly by accident (it would appear) have been thrown in her way; and how she acquired, so early in life as she did, an insight into those subjects of foreign lore which she afterwards displayed a thorough acquaintance with, was little short of a mystery. At the period to which we have now arrived she was well read in French, and almost equally well in Italian, literature. She had, in truth, been an indefatigable reader; and while triflers in society listened, expecting that her talk would be of moonlight and roses, they were often surprised to hear her—unless mirth happened to be her object, and satire or mystification her choice—discussing the character of a distant age, or the

rise of a great nation; the influence of a mighty genius upon his contemporaries; the value of a creed outworn; or some historical event, a judgment of which demanded—what she would not fail to exhibit if she spoke at all—an insight into the actors, the policy, and the manners of the time to which it related. Her studies, in short, put her in possession of great advantages, which her excellent memory enabled her to turn readily to account.

With this picture—most imperfect as it is—before us, a peep into the "boudoir" of L. E. L. may be acceptable. By an amiable female friend of hers, who writes with all the fervour of youth, we have been favoured with some impressions to which we shall recur hereafter; in this place may be introduced her recollections of the scene amidst which the inspiration of poetry had birth;—the description is "graphic." "Genius," says our accomplished informant, "hallows every place where it pours forth its inspirations. Yet how strongly contrasted, sometimes, is the outward reality around the poet, with the visions of his inward being. Is it not D'Israeli, in his 'Curiosities of Literature,' referring to this frequent incongruity, who mentions, among other facts, that Moore composed his 'Lalla Rookh' in a large barn? L. E. L. remarks on this subject, 'A history of the *how* and *where* works of imagination have been produced, would often be more ex-

traordinary than the works themselves.' Her own case is, in some degree, an illustration of perfect independence of mind over all external circumstances. Perhaps, to the L. E. L. of whom so many nonsensical things have been said—as 'that she should write with a crystal pen dipped in dew upon silver paper, and use for pounce the dust of a butterfly's wing,' a *dilettante* of literature would assign, for the scene of her authorship, a fairy-like boudoir, with rose-coloured and silver hangings, fitted with all the luxuries of a fastidious taste. How did the reality agree with this fancy sketch? Miss Landon's drawing-room, indeed, was prettily furnished, but it was her invariable habit to write in her bed-room. I see it now, that homely-looking, almost uncomfortable room, fronting the street, and barely furnished—with a simple white bed, at the foot of which was a small, old, oblong-shaped sort of dressing-table, quite covered with a common worn writing-desk heaped with papers, while some strewed the ground, the table being too small for aught besides the desk; a little high-backed cane-chair which gave you any idea rather than that of comfort—a few books scattered about completed the author's paraphernalia."

While on a visit, about this time, to her uncle James, at Aberford, she addressed the following to Mrs. S. C. Hall. It expresses her old love of London :—

"Delighted am I, my dearest Mrs. Hall, to have an opportunity of writing to you. I think, though postage, in my eyes, is one of the seven deadly sins, I should have committed it, had I anything to say. But if little happens in London, nothing happens in the country. When I have said that I am very well, very comfortable, and that all my friends are as kind to me as possible, my stock of news is exhausted. If it had been summer, I might have treated you with a little description, but the beauty of this part of the country consisting in its woods, what are they without foliage?

'It is folly to dream of a bower of green
When there is not a leaf on the tree.'

The winter is very severe. Even now the garden is partially covered with snow. However, in the more sunshiny patches, snowdrops, and pink and blue hepatices are beginning to peep out, and the greenhouse gives handsome promise of hyacinths, roses, &c. Partly from the severity of the weather, partly because it is their custom, we live very much to ourselves; but the family circle is, in itself, large and cheerful, and I do not know a more agreeable woman than my aunt. One of my cousins sings exquisitely—the younger ones were sadly distressed at my want of accomplishments. When I first arrived, Julia and Isabel began to cross question me—'Can you play?' 'No.' 'Can you

sing?' 'No.' 'Can you speak Italian?' 'No.' 'Can you draw?' 'No.' At last they came down to 'Can you write and read?' Here I was able to answer to their great relief, 'Yes, a little.' I believe Julia, in the first warmth of cousinly affection, was going to offer to teach me the alphabet. I have had a very pleasant visit, but I am as constant as ever to London. I would not take five thousand a year to settle down in the country: I miss the new books, the new faces, the new subjects of conversation—and I miss very much the old friends I have left behind."

The following is from the same place, and describes more minutely her country life while visiting, as she occasionally did, the relations she respected. These specimens are from letters somewhat later, addressed to one whose opinions she held in high esteem, and to whose views, in many things, she was anxious to conform.

"I am growing quite rustic—eating my breakfast (that is really an undertaking), walking, and learning to work in worsted. In short, acquiring a taste for innocent pleasures. . . . . I am refreshing my Tory principles, and beginning to doubt whether republics, equality, and our old favourites, are not very visionary, and somewhat reprehensible. You know my mirror-like propensities. The roses are still in blossom, and I have

made desperate friends with the cousin who is their special disposer.

"Talk of springs in deserts, roses in December, and stars, when only one is shining in the sky, I believe them to be all allegories, typifying a letter from London. Oh, LONDON! Mr. Leigh Hunt says prettily of some Italian name, that he cannot write it without pleasure. I say the same of London! When I have told you that I stay till five o'clock reading or writing, or getting exceedingly tired of myself, I have exhausted my matins. As to vespers, why I dress for dinner, and am company till bed-time. Ours is a musical house. There are pianos, harps, flutes, psaltery, and dulcimer, beside musical voices, and all played upon. I have not been out of the house, excepting to church; not a creature has even drank tea with us. Now I admit that home is an Englishman's boast and delight—that the enjoyments to be found in the bosom of your family are to be found nowhere else—excepting in every moral essay. Still—still—must not one confess one should like to pepper and salt domestic felicity with a few strangers now and then?

"Never was I so completely out of my element before; for I own I do not consider the theatre to be a sort of open house kept by Lucifer himself. Sorry am I to tell you that I, who pass in London

for a decent sort of person, rather inclined (when out of your company) to respectable Toryism, am here held to be somewhat immoral, and rather irreligious. The proof of the first is, I inadvertently quoted a line from one of Mr. Hunt's poems, and said I thought Godwin clever. For the second, I rashly preferred Miss Edgeworth's 'Tales for Children,' to 'Henry Milner,' by Mrs. Sherwood. Yet I am wonderfully popular, and my departure is earnestly deprecated. Indeed, I cannot say too much of the kindness I have received. Still I am too thoroughly London in all my ways to take cordially to the country. I miss the variety, the generality, the freedom of town talk. I miss new books, and I miss new faces (and don't I also miss familiar ones? Say that for me in your prettiest speech).

"The only modern publication that comes into the house is 'Blackwood's Magazine;' no Gazettè; no newspaper; and no book younger than some three years old; at least till it has learnt to go alone. My poetry is certainly very popular, though they wonder I do not emulate Mr. ——'s polish; and my uncle has looked out for me a vast collection of Oxford prize-poems. My poor dear novels are treated with great contempt. One cousin told me that 'she never wasted her time reading any such trash;' another said, 'she should read it as it was mine, but she preferred more solid works.

Now, is it not curious to note, when intellect has taken one shape, how it retains it? They are all highly educated, and read French, Italian, German, and Spanish. Say something very charming to the pavement of London for me."

Her intimacy with Mrs. S. C. Hall, which commenced in 1828, continued till the close of her life; and among the pleasures which were opened to her by the fame she had established, and the friendships it commanded for her, few were more delightful to her than the social and literary intercourse which for years she enjoyed under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Hall. They resided near her; she was their frequent guest in Sloane-street and at Fulham; and her talents could not be better known to the public, than her estimable qualities as a companion and a friend were known to them.

A glance at some of the various notes addressed to this lady suggests one observation—that L.E.L.'s opinions about books or about people that she liked, L.E.L. never could keep a secret; if she did not print them, she penned them down as they arose, and dispatched them to the nearest acquaintance who could appreciate them, or to the friend she had last conversed with. Of her mental activity, and the interest she took in authors, actors, and artists, perhaps unknown to her but by their works, we have evidence in innumerable scraps of correspondence with various persons; we cannot make

them available for our present purpose, and must be content thus to refer to them; but about nothing that she liked could she be long silent, and if conversation was denied her, she wrote somebody a note describing the novelty that had charmed her, or apostrophising the stranger in whom she had taken an interest.

The following will serve as well as any to give the specimen required. The heartiness of the allusion to Mr. Macready is characteristic, for she never spoke to him in her life, and never saw him but upon the stage.

"So long, my dearest Mrs. Hall, as the north wind continues, I shall consider myself privileged to write you a now-and-then note, by way of a morning call. I looked eagerly this morning at the 'Gazette' for 'Mothers and Daughters;' I liked the extract excessively—a portrait—oh! so very true—taken from nature—the artist's most difficult task. I see, too, or ratherI guess, there is a change in the theatrical politics of the 'Gazette;' I am sure, *tant mieux* in that respect—though I don't dare say as much to Mr. Jerdan—but it gave me downright pleasure to see Macready done justice to. But 'my hour is come;' and it is too disinterested an act of friendship to lose my supper, as I very much doubt your thanking me for so doing."

The supper appears to have been interrupted

most agreeably by the arrival of a pretty present from the very lady who was in her thoughts when she sat down to it, and the pen is gaily resumed;—"Don't tell me of Limerick, seeing 'as how,' I feel convinced—

'Never did mortal fingers frame
Tissue of such woven air!'

I never did see anything so delicate as the gloves you have sent me. Many thanks. I shall keep them to wear on my first plan of serious conquest, when I mean it to be a case of downright murder. Do you know"——[and it will be perceived how characteristic of her feelings were such transitions as this which now occurs, from a delightful liveliness, to a touching and serious subject which she well knew would be most welcome and most interesting to the friend she was addressing]—"Do you know I feel quite sorry for Miss Jewsbury! She has a thousand fine qualities, and talents of a very high order indeed; but she has all the exaggerating sensitiveness which I have observed in too many literary people, towards the opinions of those whose good word is valueless, and whose evil one is powerless for the same reason—neither are spoken in sincerity. I am sure I would not take upon myself to say that Mrs. —— has not spoken ill of her, but I am quite sure if it were my own case, I should not care about it. . . . . I am afraid you will cry out, 'don't be quite so much your

own nominative.' Truly, they ought to have placed *I* instead of *A*, at the beginning of the alphabet. If anybody can forgive me, you will . . . . . How do you yourself get on? [with the novel Mrs. Hall was writing.] I have been reading the reign of William and Mary, in Smollett, on purpose to recal the period; but oh! Smollett after Hume! 'It is as dull as howling after music.' I believe Hume is not the fashion, but nothing can be more delightful to read than his history."

It was at the house of this friend, in Sloane-street, that L. E. L. first met

"The prince of the bards of his time,"—

Wordsworth. Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Jameson, Barry Cornwall, Allan Cunningham, Michael Thomas Sadler, and many others then and since distinguished were present. L. E. L. was delighted with her evening; but with a pretty playfulness of feminine humour, the first thing she thought of the next morning, when noting down her impressions of the brilliant literary party, was Mrs. Hall's velvet dress. In her note she says, "You never looked better; pray be as careful of that black velvet dress as if it were a fairy's gift, and the loss would entail all sorts of misfortune. I never saw anything become you so much." And then for her own particular comfort, she proceeds to express "a little of her liking to Mrs. Jameson, as one of the very few that she quite longs to meet again." Of

that accomplished writer she says at another time, "I should think Mrs. Jameson must be a delightful woman. I shall never forget how fascinated I was with her 'Diary of an Ennuyée.'" Of Wordsworth, too, who is alluded to in the subjoined passage, she has elsewhere written, in a spirit of lofty appreciation and admiring regard. "There is a story in Plutarch, I think (I never vouch for the correctness of my classics), that the day after the festival complained bitterly, that its predecessor had left nothing for its portion but weariness and lassitude. I have no such complaint to make. I am so well to-day that I really think I must have been a little *la malade imaginaire*. Amusement is mighty good for most complaints—I found it very beneficial for mine. By the by, you never duly stated what a handsome young man Mr. —— is; being a genius, I took it for granted he must be a fright. There is something very impressive in Wordsworth—something rugged and mountainous. He gave me the idea that the statuary suggested to Alexander the Great—Mount Athos cut into a colossal statue of humanity. What a pretty creature Miss Geraldine Jewsbury is! You will have to answer for a revived taste for dissipation. I really gave myself credit for being grown quite recluse and philosophical, but I have found my first party so delightful that I am now longing to go to another. I dare say my next will cure me;

one swallow does not make a summer, and a pleasant party is a rarity."

But to return to the subject from which a recollection of that pleasant party, and the letter commemorative of it, have diverted our attention—her constant habit of writing letters of friendly criticism, with all the industry and copiousness of one who had no critical tasks to perform publicly, or no channel for the expression of her opinions. Many writers, those of established reputation equally with the more obscure, can boast of "articles" in acknowledgment of the works they had presented to her—letters, not of mere compliment, but entering at length into the merits of the subject—not merely pointing out what she liked or objected to, but stating why—and stamping a value upon her opinion, by showing how carefully she had read what she had reviewed. By several authors we have been favoured with letters of this description; and their publication here would have been a gratifying duty, had the interest of the various subjects demanded the same remembrance which is due to the motive that prompted the criticism.

It will be enough to show her unweariedness in this respect, and how minutely she would discuss even the smallest contributions to the literature of the time, to refer to her numberless notes upon the publication of any magazine in which she happened to take interest; from these it would appear that no

monthly number escaped her critical observation; and that she took as much pains to let the editor (or at least his lady) know what she thought of each contribution in succession, as though she had been called upon to play the critic officially. Many of these notes have reference to the "New Monthly," at the period when it was under the management of Mr. S. C. Hall; and, if it came within the scope of our design to print any of them here, they would prove how unwearied was her application, how interested she was in even the fleeting literature of her day, and how habitual was her anxiety for the welfare of her friends. How many such commentaries would she write, and through how many motley pages would she read, before the materials for her letter were collected! To those who, looking at the quantity of her published prose and poetry, might wonder how she found time for all these private and unproductive exercises of her pen, it may be desirable to explain, not merely that she wrote, but that she read, with remarkable rapidity. Books, indeed, of the highest character, she would dwell upon with "amorous delay;" but those of ordinary interest, or the nine-day-wonders of literature, she would run through in a much shorter space of time than would seem consistent with that thorough understanding of their contents at which she always arrived, or with that accurate observation of the less striking features which she would generally

prove to have been bestowed, by reference almost to the very page in which they might be noted. Of some work, which she scarcely seemed to have glanced through, she would give an elaborate and succinct account, pointing out the gaps in the plot, or the discrepancies in the characters, and supporting her judgment by all but verbatim quotations.

The impression left by such a work as "Eugene Aram," would long remain on her mind:—

"Since I have been here, I have been reading 'Eugene Aram' through again. Daniel Clarke was a tenant of my aunt's great-grandfather, and they have still a silver tankard which he borrowed. I am even more delighted with it than at first. It is wonderful how the interest is sustained. Perfectly aware of the end, you hope an impossibility —against hope. And then the dialogues are of such perfect beauty. Madeline's letter is the most lovely thing of its kind, in fiction or in fact."

The following refers to some of her own writings, and replies to a friendly comment.

"As to our old point at issue, I am not yet converted. Would not you be the last to say that the likeness of life, like any other likeness (of me, for instance!) ought to be flattered to please? 'Betty, give this cheek a little red,' is the common cry of all death-struck Narcissas. In what do I differ from the actual experience of the past—the future has to teach us its lessons yet—when I paint ambition

as a vain delusion, love as a still vainer, and genius as making its own misery? Moreover, who shall deny that wherever Nature has been most prodigal in her gifts, there Fortune has been almost sure to thwart with adverse circumstances? Who are the most contented people you know? The mentally indolent: the money-getting: those whose ideal of happiness is 'being comfortable.' The inherent horror of death is the greatest hold that life has upon us. Let any one look their own past experience steadily in the face, and what a dark and discouraging aspect will it not present? How many enjoyments have passed away for ever! how much warmth and kindliness of feeling! how many generous beliefs! As to love—does it dare to treasure its deepest feelings in the presence of what we call the world? As to friendship—how many would weigh your dearest interests for one instant against the very lightest of their own? And as to fame, of what avail is it in the grave?—and during life it will be denied, or dealt forth grudgingly. No, no. To be as indifferent as you can possibly contrive—to aim only at present amusement and passing popularity—is the best system for a steam-coach along the railroad of life. Let who will break the stones, and keep up the fire!"

With the aid of her cousins she once ventured on some German translations, to which she thus alludes:—

"I am hard at work on my 'Count Egmont.'

The *denouement* will require entire alteration, and the Germans must have the patience of Job to stand such long speeches. The lover greatly diverts me. He politely informs the audience, that in his despair he threw himself into the water, but grew frightened, and swam back to land. Next he gets poison, but he does not at all fancy taking it (should you?), so he retires, declaring he is quite sure he shall die of a broken heart."

The Misses Lance were now about to quit the house in Hans-place: with this reference to the event, we pass to other subjects:—

"Was there ever anything so unlucky as the house in Hans-place letting just when it did? It might have made up its mind before I left, or waited till I returned. How I shall miss the Misses Lance! The more I think over their constant kindness, the more deeply I feel I shall never meet again with such sincere, such disinterested friends. I regret the change, oh! so much! I had adapted myself so completely to their ways. Certainly they will suit no one else—and oh the horror of having to adopt a complete set of new habits! Might one not wish that there were no strangers in the world? Then to return to Hans-place itself! How very much *contre cœur* that will be! A familiar place with new faces sets the teeth of all one's remembrances on edge."

It was during her earlier intimacy with Mrs. Hall, and perhaps influenced by her judgment and

advice, that L. E. L. resolved to devote herself seriously to a long-talked-of project—the production of a novel. If there was much to gain, there was something to risk by the attempt. Airy and animated sketches of character, pointed dialogue, richly-coloured descriptions, imagination thrusting out matter of fact when most wanted; in short, *digressions* of extreme beauty, and without number, were to be looked for by all who knew anything of the qualities of the new novelist; but for the combination of all the principles that enter into a complete character, for the construction of a story, and the skill to conduct it to a triumphant close, her capacity was yet to be tried. She evaded the experiment in "Romance and Reality." This first prose work of L. E. L.'s was commenced—probably without any settled plan—in 1830, and, in the following year, it was published.

A note to the first edition of "Romance and Reality," apologizing for mistakes, contains a confession of carelessness in composition which might not inaccurately be applied to most of L. E. L.'s writings, and to all her earlier works. As an example of it, she admits that, "but for the care of 'the readers' connected with the press through which these pages have passed, both heroine and hero would have undergone that peculiarly English reproach of 'being called out of their names,' (Lord Ethringhame being styled Reginald at first,

and afterwards Algernon) in almost every chapter. I do not," she proceeds, "go quite so far as the lively American writer, who, in the amusing tale of the 'Cacoethes Scribendi,' encourages her whole family to write, by the assurance that 'the printers would find them spelling and grammar;' but I do gratefully confess, my obligations have been many to mine. The long sentences made short, the obscure made plain,—the favourite words that would, like Monsieur Tonson, come again—the duplicate quotations—for the amendment of all these," &c., the printers were to be thanked. As she remarks, on another occasion, a proof sheet is a terrible reality. With just so much care had she devoted herself to the task of gratifying the public curiosity. Yet, her new work suffered still more, perhaps, from the opposite fault of over-anxiety. Every chapter almost appears to have been written under the influence of an apprehension, lest any one sentence should be thought dull, any portraiture tame, any scene prosaic. Each page has its half-dozen similes, and the purpose of the story, where story may be traced, is continually checked by the spirit of reflection, or of raillery, to which every turn of it gives rise in the author's mind. What her characters fail to say, she is always ready to say for them. The first half of the work, indeed, is little more than a series of discussions upon books and society, life in romance, and

life in reality—fashion, manners, motives—love, hope, youth—marriage and disappointment—art and theatricals—the contradictions and mysteries of human character, and philosophy in its endless diversities—all written with freshness and piquancy, and illustrated with sufficient point and anecdote to season twice the number of pages. Amongst the sketches, real and imaginary, we trace resemblances to many of her literary contemporaries; of whom several had to acknowledge in her commentaries the candid critic, or the partial friend. From these gay and sprightly delineations of life, the work deepens, in the last half of it, into a tale of sorrow and sensibility, exhibiting a quick insight into much that is most hidden, as well as a high appreciation of all that is most lofty, in the character of her own sex—a tale written in its lighter parts with natural grace, and in its more elevated passages with earnestness and power. "Romance and Reality" did not, perhaps, exactly fulfil the expectations that had been formed of it; but it did more than this, by giving, not a promise, but the assurance, of greater and stronger powers to penetrate into the philosophy of actual life, than had previously been suspected to exist in companionship with her rich fancy, and her sympathies with the romantic.

To show that the superabundance of simile and illustration, which is, incontestably, a fault in these

volumes, was less the result of an excess of anxiety to fill the page with brilliancies, than of an inveterate habit, it was only necessary to hear her converse for five minutes, or to read an ordinary note of five lines about the merest trifle. Here is one, written while this novel was in the course of composition; and, being about the length specified, contains, nevertheless, three distinct similes. With the exception of "My dear Madam," and yours sincerely,"—this is the entire note:—

"We have a young friend staying in the house, and where there are young ladies, novels are, *like lovers*, very welcome. We have read through every book in my possession, and now, *like beggars*, are going about to our neighbours. Can you be charitable? Any of the recent novels would be most thankfully received. I am writing in great haste, for a messenger in our house is *like a carrier-pigeon*, a rarity, and I must take advantage of the servant's going out."

In the same year, 1831, appeared the first volume of "Fisher's Drawing-room Scrap-book," a handsome quarto, containing upwards of thirty poems illustrative of an equal number of engravings. "It is not an easy thing," L. E. L. remarks, "in the introduction to this first essay, to write illustrations to prints selected rather for their pictorial excellence than their poetic capabilities, and mere description is certainly not the most popular

species of composition." The difficulty was gracefully overcome, and immediate popularity was the reward. The Scrap-book became an annual; each year, it may be justly said, producing a better series of poems than the preceding. The eighth and last volume by L. E. L. was completed previous to her departure from England in 1838. She had long become accustomed to the task of writing to the subject set before her, whatever it might be, and here the topics presented for poetical illustration were certainly miscellaneous enough. On all of them, or nearly all, she found something pointed, something touching or eloquent to say; investing common-place with beauty—

> "Clothing the palpable and the familiar
> With golden exhalations;"

while in the higher class of subjects, she found opportunities of exercising her matured powers seemingly unconscious of restraint. Not merely does this work contain unquestionable evidence of the versatility of her talents, and the ease with which she could adapt them to the most unpromising subjects, but it comprises much of her best writing—poems exhibiting a greatly improved taste, a more studious care for the harmonies of versification, a deeper and clearer vein of thought, and a knowledge of "the greatest art, the art to blot."

In addition to various poetical contributions to

the "Annuals," and the "New Monthly Magazine," and the composition of another series of poems for the "Drawing-Room Scrap-Book," L.E.L., in 1832, produced twelve accompaniments to some engravings, issued by the same publisher, under the title of "The Easter Gift, a Religious Offering." These sacred poems are in every way worthy of the feeling with which they were introduced. "They were written," she says, "in a spirit of the deepest humility, but whose fear is not 'of this world;'" and she states that the illustration of these scriptural subjects had given her the opportunity of embodying many a sad and serious thought which had arisen in hours of solitude and despondency. "I believe I myself am the better for their existence; I wish their effect may be the same on others. In this hurrying and deceitful world, no page will be written utterly in vain, which awakens one earnest or heavenward thought, one hope, or one fear, in the human heart."

Many of the engravings to which L.E.L. was called upon to provide poetical accompaniments, were views of eastern scenery and antiquities; and mellifluously to mention the bare names of the places required something like an effort of genius. To the perplexity this occasioned her, and to a poem on a subject of Indian history, which merits more than a passing note of praise, L.E.L. alludes in one of those rambling and characteristic letters

by which she often sought to divert her friends, and in which a friend might always read her thoughts and fancies upon any subject, philosophical or frivolous, just as it occurred to her. The following, addressed to Mrs. S. C. Hall, may serve as a specimen—

"I have been just hurried out of my life with getting my 'Drawing-room Scrap-book' finished. I sent off my last packet of manuscript by yesternoon's post, and to-day I write to you. The volume just completed contains one long poem founded on Indian history; a connected story called the 'Zenana,' and longer than the 'Venetian Bracelet.' How my ingenuity has been taxed to introduce the different places! and, pray, forgive this little tender effusion of vanity, I do pique myself on contriving to get from Dowlutabad to Shusher, and Penawa, and the Triad Figure in the Caves of Elephante, and from thence to Ibrahim Padshah's tomb, &c. &c. But I am too sick of all these hard names to inflict any more upon you. It is four years since I have written a long poem. I cannot describe to you the enjoyment of going back again to 'my first-love and my last.' I can only say that writing poetry is like writing one's native language, and writing prose, writing in a strange tongue. So much for myself; as for others, I have scarcely been out of the house. Yesterday I dined at Lady ——'s, and had a very

pleasant evening; there I met Sir —— ——, one of the most pleasant and intelligent men I have seen for a long time. He was remarking that the Indians have such extreme flexibility of ears that they can move them as easily as we do our eyebrows—and that in all savage nations the toes are so useful, that they can pick up things just as we do with our fingers. It is curious to observe how many bodily faculties lie dormant in a social state. It is as if mind and body were at perpetual variance, and that the perfection of the one must be bought at the expense of the other. Lady —— had on a most picturesque head-dress, an Italian silk net, twisted round the hair, of green ribbon. I am no great admirer of the fanciful in costume generally, but this was very simple and pretty. But, while on the subject of dress, I must tell you of a new style of shawl I saw on Mrs. ——. It is formed of broad stripes of different coloured velvets; first, a rich dahlia, then orange, then such a green! a golden brown, and the loveliest of blues! It is very large, and lined with amber silk. I never saw anything so magnificent and oriental. Mr. —— has only just given her a diamond necklace of two thousand guineas, and a diamond bandeau ditto. It is quite enough to make any body wish to be married. . . . The Haymarket has been quite unvisited this season; but I have been once to the Victoria, the prettiest little theatre in London. I

23366

was so delighted with Miss Jarman as *Jeannie Deans*—so sensible, so natural, and so affecting, and speaking, too, the most Doric Scotch. But the principal event, in my late monotonous existence, has been going to see Apsley House, which is fitted up with even more good taste than splendour. There are many portraits of Napoleon, one by David, the most speaking likeness that ever was seen. Indeed, the whole house is a most interesting chapter in the History of England, and the blinds are the moral! As to domestic adventures we have none—only the chimnies were kind enough to be blown down the other day, which did produce a sensation. I thought the whole house was coming, and began to bid myself an affectionate good bye. Also a new pump has been built in the square, and never before did I duly prize the blessings of a rainy morning—for, at five o'clock they begin to water the road, and truly this said pump enacts the part of *Macbeth*, and murders sleep. . . . I have just married my heroine—a thing very symptomatic of a closing volume. Only three chapters now remain, and glad enough shall I be when they are done."

The heroine whose marriage, as symptomatic of a close, is thus rejoiced in, was "Francesca Carrara;" a performance that wrung from the severest of her critics, and the most prejudiced of her readers, the amplest admission of her great qualifica-

tions as a writer of romantic fiction. They could no longer affect to regard her as the mere singer of idle love-songs, or the weaver of fanciful ballads "without a moral;" but while they acknowledged her powerful conceptions of character—her truth and knowledge, which is the truth and knowledge of woman only, in the delineation of woman—the spirit and brilliancy of her set-scenes—her frequent wit and occasional eloquence, they acknowledged too that she was yet unversed in the essential art of using her powers with any proportionate effect. That her real deficiencies were pointed out, however, in some quarters, with temper and discernment, and that the enlargement of her genius, as denoted in many of the scenes and characters of her new work, was ungrudgingly recognized, it may be here a pleasant task to show. The criticism of which the leading passages are about to be laid before the reader, is especially referred to, because it presents in the clearest language, and with admirable ability, all the strength of the objections that might not unfairly be urged against the false direction of her powers, and the inconsistencies, wilful or unconscious, that often defeated her eager search after truth, and disfigured her disquisitions upon life.

Having defined it to be a book "written on the greatest misery-possible principle," and as surpassing most others in its "prodigious capacity for

wretchedness"—the actors and the action belonging more to a dream than to life—yet destined to live in a "vague and impassioned remembrance," the critic glances at the more real portions of the work, and these he finds far away from the main conduct and tendency of the story.

"Francesca has nothing in common with the Court of the youthful Louis the Fourteenth, but Miss Landon has. We are, consequently, taken there; and nothing can be better than the scenes we are suffered to have part in. They are a delicious mixture of the imaginative and real. What a gorgeous tapestry she unrolls to introduce us to a more gorgeous company within; and with what brilliant truth she realizes them—what a nice perception of the various shades of character, yet all of the Court—courtly. In the most real things that are said or done, there would seem to be nothing real. Everybody talks with a sort of effort, and yet talks to the point, and with cleverness. Courtiers are not less successful because they strive to be so. Every one of them has something of a heart, though, like the *Medecin malgré lui*, they have every one of them altered its position. They are human beings, and yet they are courtiers—they seem, on all truthful and material points, to wink and shut their apprehensions up, and yet how full of apprehensions they are—even how wise, 'seeing through all things with their half-shut eyes.' We never saw court-scenes drawn so completely to the life as they are drawn in 'Francesca Carrara.'

"The whole book, indeed, why should we hesitate to say, notwithstanding that we feel its dangerous tendency, is a book of remarkable power and genius. There is a fiery abundance of informing spirit in it that might have served to crowd with meaning fifty ordinary novels. The entire result would have proved very different if the author could have consented to write more with her intellect and less with her will—more with

a looking abroad 'into universality,' and less with an intense consciousness of her own existence alone.

"We do not use these words in the common acceptation of selfishness. We believe the consciousness we speak of in Miss Landon, from these evidences of her writing, to be of a much more generous, though of a scarcely less mistaken order. She suffers, in fact, from a sensibility too extreme—from an acute and even morbid feeling of all that relates to her own impressions, or to the objects and events of her own life. No single feeling they may have left seems to have been forgotten. No object or event that has caused her an emotion seems to have been effaced. Every such emotion, indeed, has worked itself into a passion—and over passions how vain is forced control. Hence, it is that they crowd up wilfully into the pages without coherency or proper neighbourhood. Hence, in this Francesca Carrara, the particular truth, and the general falsehood—the remarkable keenness of feeling and penetration, and the equally remarkable want of final truth, or of large comprehension of mind. For so true it is, that the same intense apprehensions which enables us to discern the first principles of things, and, as in the case of some suffering or experience, seize one particular view of it which shall be individually true, and take up a lasting and passionate abode with us—the same intense feeling is precisely that which prevents our admitting the operation of other causes needful to its wise generalization and controul, but interfering with the favourite view we have taken; and thus we are involved in contradictions, endless and wilful.

"There are few who will not readily acknowledge this, after reading half of the first volume of this novel. We may add, that to read so far is to read the whole, for the interest and fascination of the book are extreme. The very characteristic we have been mentioning, indeed, secures this, though it interferes with the general keeping and the final truth of the writing. The passions are kept constantly at work—the pulse that agitates them never ceases to beat. We feel this whether we follow the patient yet passionate sufferings of Guido, the divine

truth, and the holy affections of Francesca, or the high-aimed coquetry, the sublime selfishness of the Mancini. We yield to them as they severally move us, unable to reason out of its influence the genius which gives birth to all—so various in its powers, so complicated and full of contrast in its sympathies. How nobly could it have realized a nobler purpose! Miss Landon never so forcibly illustrated the extent of her genius, proving at the same time how ill-regulated and unworthily directed it may be, as by this novel of 'Francesca Carrara.'"

Nor is the unsparing exposition confined to these inconsistencies alone, for there are others that may be as frankly admitted as they are difficult to account for. Such, for example, are those merely personal remarks and opinions, that, throughout her writings, are carelessly flung out in defiance of reason, and often apparently for the sake of turning some noble passage of sentiment or devotion, in the midst of which they are obtruded, into flat insincerity or affectation. The critic illustrates this from the work we have been considering. "While," he says, "we are dwelling on the unequalled picture of love, of entire trust, of friendship sustained through life, and triumphing over the uncertainties of the grave—all illustrated with so serious, so sweet, and so enduring a truth in the lives of Guido, of Evelyn, and Francesca—we are told in smart and solid phrases by the very author of these noble creatures, that 'consistency expresses nothing human,' and that 'confidence is what no human being ever really had in another.' While we are admir-

ing the sense of justice with which she discriminates the great struggle of the English commoners against the bad faith of the English king, she is good enough to indulge us with a second opinion, that if Charles had given up the bishops, uncurled his hair, and spoken through his nose, he might have been an absolute monarch in all but name!"

Such criticism as this undoubtedly had its influence in exciting L. E. L. to the correction of several of her faults; for the sternness and rigidity of the censure were not unaccompanied by that seductiveness of just praise without which it might have awakened in such a nature as hers, no other feeling than resentment, and an obstinate resolution to cling to errors to the last, as the only things that had been faithful to her. Thus the style of "Francesca Carrara" is admired as extremely elegant, pure, and impassioned, while the book itself is described as that only from which can be drawn the smallest idea of the brilliant truth of its court-dialogue, or of the exalted nature of the fine creations that are bodied forth in it. "Our hearts own them, and they are hereafter consecrated in our imaginations."

Another testimony from a different pen, to the power and the success of this work, will close the notice that it claimed.

"'Francesca Carrara' is of the past—there is both more poetry, and more truth in the work now before us than in the

other; we *feel* the characters to be more real—there is more of consistency both in the plot and in its development, and less crowding of smart and clever things—less show, and more substance. We were, perhaps, more astonished at the first, because we hardly expected such prose from such a poet; but it promised more for the future, and as 'Francesca' is the future of that period, we in some degree looked forward to the beauties we have found. We know not where, or how, the female writers of our time procure their insight into human nature; Miss Landon reads hearts and motives, as men read books and pamphlets, and reads them truly; her delineations are perfect —her sketches full of the truth and vigour of nature!

"Her range in prose is more extensive than her range in poetry. Her lyre is generally tuned to the same purposes—the blight of love, the hollowness of the world: there is a mournful cadence in all it sings of—a wail, a sorrow, or a sigh! But in prose she lives with us,—now sanctifying—now satirizing—now glittering with the French in their most brilliant court, playing with diamonds, and revelling in wit,—then reposing on one of the finest creations that human genius ever called into existence—the holy friendship of Guido and Francesca. The whole range of modern fiction offers nothing like the portraiture of these two cousins: it is at once beautiful and sublime, and yet perfectly natural and true;—the skill of the woman is admirably developed in this particular creation. A man would have *philosophised* Guido and Francesca into friendship; and those who read would have immediately discovered that, between two so constituted, the thing would have been impossible, notwithstanding the philosophy; but Miss Landon, by a simple and natural arrangement, sets all doubts at rest, by *pre-occupying* both hearts. Here, at once, is the *prevention* of love, and the *motive* for friendship perceived, without any explanation."—*New Monthly, Jan.* 1835.

In the summer of 1834, an opportunity had occurred, through Sir A. Farquhar and his daughter,

of accomplishing a visit to Paris. L. E. L. had a friend, Miss Turin, staying in the gay city at that time, and this was felt to be an additional convenience. Moreover, she had then determined upon laying the scene of a new novel amidst the French revolution, and to do this it was desirable to know something of the *locale*. In Paris, then, we find her, in the month of June, seeking and enjoying a sensation of which the following is her hasty, rambling, but characteristic record. It is a letter addressed to the author of the "Sketches of Irish Character."

"I do not know at how many feet from the ground this letter is written—truly, I was never so exalted in my life before; and yet we are less exalted than the generality. Oh, the measureless staircases, longer than life itself!—but you know them. I am delighted with Paris, enchanted with the people, and, horrible as I thought the journey, I must confess I thought the pleasure well worth the pain. Yet I have chosen the worst possible season for my visit. Nobody is in Paris, and nothing is going on. A second visit would be more favourable than a first, as sight-seeing would then form no part of my duty; and, certainly, I am the worst sight-seer in the world. I really do not, in my heart, care for all the articles in marble, stone, or brick, that were ever ushered in with a paragraph in the 'Stranger's Guide'—'This mag-

nificent, &c., well deserves all a stranger's attention.' In my plan of Paradise, people will ride very little, and walk not at all. In revenge, they shall have the most comfortable chairs, and talk from morning to night. Now, if my plan of Paradise does not suit people, they have only to form one according to their own fancy. I cannot tell you what great kindness I have received from everybody, or the charming notes and the too charming speeches. I am sure the French well deserve their character for amiability and politeness, or, I really should rather say, kindness. I shall return with the most pleasant and grateful recollections. I have been reading a great many French works; truly it is well that I wear my hair tightly banded, or it would certainly have risen straight on my head with downright dismay and astonishment. Yet there is extraordinary talent—every page full of new ideas and thoughts—they want nothing but a little religion and a little decency—two trifling wants, to be sure. The whole of French conversation, as far as I can judge, is much more intellectual, with more thought, and less about persons, than in England. . . . . We went to Nôtre Dame—such a fine old church, and such a view of Paris to look down upon; for we went up to the very top, and, hot as it was, I was glad that we had done so. Indeed, I have taken quite a course of old churches, though I am not turned

Catholic. The shops are, as the prophet said of Damascus, too delightful; but I cannot say that, excepting two or three slight things, the articles are so cheap as in London. Silks, muslins, prints, ribbons, pelerines, are *awfully* dear. We have charming lodgings, overlooking two pretty gardens, and the front of Mr. Rothschild's hotel, and then an open view as far as Montmartre and its windmills. We have our dinners from a restaurant's, the Café de Paris; they are delicious, but I find scarcely a dish that I have not previously eaten in England. I am making an experimental voyage through the *carte*, and have had a different dish every day." . . . .

Her pleasant recollections of Paris, however, were always associated with an adventure of a character more exciting than agreeable, that happened to her on her journey home. Of all the passengers who presented themselves to the notice of the Custom-house authorities, L. E. L., to her surprise and consternation, was selected for the compliment of particular search. Her inexperience in such matters, and a natural timidity on seeing herself in so unusual a situation, perhaps increased the suspicion these authorities had suddenly taken upon themselves to entertain, that she had concealed about her person sundry laces, silks, or trinkets, which had not yielded the lawful tribute to the revenue. She was as innocent of a thought of

fraud as the king himself; but her protestations, eloquent as they were, went for nothing, or, possibly, stimulated inquiry. A gold chain, which she wore, was remorselessly detained, and pronounced to be forfeited; what was worse, it was not her own property, it belonged to a friend, and had, in fact, paid the legal duty; it was restored after a few days. L. E. L. used to laugh at this tribulation, afterwards, and made the investigating matron the heroine of a litle comic romance. What she suspected, and what, no doubt, was the cause of the very particular attentions which she was singled out to receive on this occasion, was the best part of the comedy. The authorities of the Custom-house had received notice of the coming of "a lady," by whose practices, for a considerable time past, the revenue had been defrauded; they were, consequently, on the alert, and ready to receive any hint that might lead to detection. Now, there was every reason to suppose that a fellow-passenger of L. E. L's., who had been endeavouring to render herself rather agreeable to her, without knowing whom it was she was conversing with, was the identical "lady" addicted to the illicit propensities in question; and there is scarcely less reason to suppose—so at least L. E. L. used vehemently to insist—that it was this very "lady" who hinted at the proper season to the vigilant officers, that by directing their attention to L. E. L.

herself, they would, no doubt, discover the object of their suspicions!

To another intimate and valued friend she also gave an account of her Parisian experiences. Frivolous as the details are with which she commences, it was one of her characteristics that any one she liked should know what objects surrounded her in any new place she visited. The post-mark is July, 1834.

"What a waste of time it is ever to make a resolution: my most decided intention, on leaving England, was to keep a journal. I might just as well have decided on keeping a troop of horse. The first fortnight might be comprehended in two words, or, rather, four—feeling very ill, and feeling very tired; and, I may add, very unhappy; everything seemed strange, and I so completely alone. Our lodging is pleasant enough (it was in the Rue Taitbout, Chaussée d'Antin, No. 30). Fancy yourself ascending a staircase twice the height of Miss Lance's; you will then arrive at a huge door. You enter through a little ante-chamber, hung with dark-brown paper, with an orange border, a piano and some chairs being all the furniture. This leads on one side to my room; on the other to the *salon*, which is hung with blue paper, or rather purple, and has a balcony looking down on a delightful garden. If you furnish this room with a sofa, whose cushions are stuffed with

hay, equally hard and sweet, chairs covered with blue velvet, a marble table, a secretaire, two vases filled with flowers, another table covered with books, and myself writing to you, you will have an exact idea of my present position.

"I have seen a good many strangers, and it would take a quire of paper to detail all the little agonies I have suffered from them, all the little 'states' that I have been in. Though all my life I have lived in society, and had to make my own way, I never get accustomed to doing it. I am unconquerably irresolute and shy. The utmost that I can do, and that by force of long habit, is to conceal my embarrassment, and to feel it, for that very concealment, all the more. What hesitation and difficulty does it always cost me to enjoy! . . . . I cannot tell you half the flattering kindness I have met with. M. Odillon Barrot appears to be about thirty; has the most kind, gentle, and encouraging manners; and, perhaps, of all I have seen here, is the one to whom I would apply the term gentlemanlike. He is, you know, a most distinguished person; and, you do not know, has beautiful blue eyes. He went with us, yesterday, to the Pantheon; without an exception, the finest building I ever saw. We ascended some thousands of steps to the top. . . . . Then we went to the Cabinet of Natural History. Such birds, beasts, and fishes! If imitation be the most graceful of

flatteries, this building is a delicate attention to Noah's ark. It contains a specimen of everything on earth, in sea, or air. . . . . The person whom I think the most interesting is a Monsieur Fontaney, a young poet of about four-and-twenty, or less. . . . . He answers very well to my idea of a French genius—pale, dark, sombre, and with a sort of enthusiasm of which we have no idea in England. . . . . He joined our party at the theatre, or, rather, came into the next box. His conversation is very intellectual, and very spirited—or let me use the French word, '*spirituel.*' The opera was the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, which said temptation is the being made love to by a very beautiful woman, created by his Satanic Majesty for that very worthy purpose. *Miranda* (Mdlle. Duvernay) danced like an angel, if angels dance, which, I take it, is rather a debateable point. Going to the theatre made me very melancholy, I kept thinking so much of the Victoria! Talk of French vivacity! I don't know in what it consists. All that I have met are peculiarly quiet. Oh, the number of pretty things that there are in the shops! One could spend a fortune in a week. I shall come back with all sorts of new ideas. You, however, must be contented with some old ones."

To the same friend she describes her impressions on the perusal of Victor Hugo's ".Lucretia

Borgia," which she had been recommended to read.

"What a terrible pleasure I owe you, that 'Lucretia Borgia' has struck me deeply! What a scene that is between her and her husband, where she attempts to make him forget his vengeance by filling his mind with the first fascination of her beauty, which, to be turned upon him for a moment, was such sweet flattery. I like Gennaro's love for his unknown parent. The deepest feelings of the human heart are those given to the unattainable and the mysterious. Love for the known and the possessed takes the more endurable (is it not so?) but less poetical form of affection. The *denouement* is dreadful. So true! for it is curious to note how constantly vice is punished through some last touch of lingering goodness. Thus

'Soon or late it is its own avenger.'

Some kindly feeling, some dearest sympathy, that would have been happiness to the innocent, becomes torture in its worst shape to the guilty."

From a few of the many notes addressed, almost daily, to various friends about this period, some passages may be taken as exact specimens of the free and careless manner in which L. E. L. invariably wrote to her intimate acquaintances. If, in this respect, their literary interest should appear too slight, let it be observed that they afford the

reader some insight into her daily feelings and associations at an important stage of her career, and lead to the gratifying conviction that the prevalent tone of her spirits, notwithstanding all she had undergone, was far less weary and depressed than those who judged her by her writings were accustomed to suppose. And it may be as well to remark that L. E. L., in her epistolary habits, reversed the maxim by which long letters are excused on the score of a want of time to write short ones; she rarely wrote into a second sheet, and scarcely ever in her life crossed her lines, after the approved fashion among lady letter-writers; but, of brief epistles, few people wrote so many. The reason was, that the merest act of courtesy, or an ordinary civility, which others would receive almost as a thing of course, or for which their gratitude might well admit of being reserved for a chance meeting, was sure to produce from her a note of acknowledgment, magnifying it into a marvellous kindness; and this would probably be followed by one or two excuses for writing, each repaying the slightest of obligations by such favours as only the kindliest of natures could bestow, or such anxiety to do so, as only such a nature as hers could feel.

These remarks will, perhaps, render it unnecessary to apologise for the introduction of the following fragments from notes to Mrs. Hall:—

"I hope you mean to be a pattern of propriety,

keep within doors, and look upon Sloane-street as if it were the avenue to the castle of the east wind. As for myself, I have no more breath than an apple, on which a philosopher has been trying experiments, by putting it in his pump and extracting the air. I liked your story in the 'Edinburgh Magazine' much. I must say though, in the present state of the country, a premium ought to be given to those who patriotically remain single."—

"It is quite terrible to think how a person's principles may be undermined. What with your cottage and this cottage, I am in dreadful danger of being taken romantic, and of talking about rural felicity—unsophisticated feeling, and the beauties of nature, and those vain prejudices which I have hitherto so entirely abjured . . I enjoyed all the delights of the country in the most resolute manner, for I got ankle-deep in mud yesterday in the wood adjoining. You cannot think how beautiful all is hereabout—so richly wooded, and not a vestige of London, and a perpetual succession of showers driving over the hills, like a flight of arrows sent by some aerial army. A piece of water runs through the grounds; it abounds with fish, and has a fleet of ducks, and two or three islands of water-lilies—some half-dozen falls 'leaping to music,' a bridge, and is in one part overhung with trees. There is also plenty of innocent amusements—bows and arrows, swings,

battledores, &c. I cannot say I have recourse to any, holding to mine ancient belief of the superfelicity of talking."

"I was at Mr. Holling's collection of sculpture. There is a superb bust of Mrs. Norton—such a head as might have suited Zenobia, ere she yielded up her desert city to the Roman conqueror. There is also the most lovely statue of a child I ever saw; the very ideal of infancy. I have been to two or three little dances, among so many gay captains, that I cannot decide on which I have lost my heart to, or indeed if I have lost it at all. I have also been exceedingly industrious, and am rapidly progressing with my third volume, ('Francesca') . . . Thank heaven, Fisher's book is finished—above thirty poems, and only one in which *love* is even mentioned! There's hard-heartedness for you. Are you not glad to be at home again, to see the pavement! I dare say England has its faults, but it may comfort itself by saying, 'I am a deal better than my neighbours,' and comparisons are only odious to those who suffer by them."

The close of the following allusion to the burning of the houses of parliament, amusingly illustrates the insufficiency of the imagination to enable us to hold a fire in the hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus.

"Could you see the reflection of the fire? I spent nearly an hour at our garret-window watch-

ing it. The blaze was far higher than any of the intervening houses; it gave me the idea—at least it was like the idea I have, of a volcano. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the sky, loaded in one part with dense clouds of a most peculiar crimson, while in another the moon was dispersing the lightest of snowy vapours, and the air was of the clearest blue. I do so regret that I did not see it. I should be sorry to have any one's chimney take fire for my express pleasure; but if such a thing was to happen, my seeing it could have done no harm, and it would have greatly delighted,—no, that is not the word—astonished me! I never even saw a crowd in my life. *Oh! how cold it is.* I am really writing, a little worse than usual—my fingers are so chilled."

Another slight passage will take us by a leap into the next summer.

"A thousand thanks for the loveliest of roses. One is certainly more grateful in summer than at any other time. If there is anything in nature, it warms into life with the sunshine. After the long dreary winter, with nothing but colds, shawls and watergruel, it is quite delicious to feel well and clever again. But I am already beginning to fear the enjoyment of this delightful weather; for I know that Fate will revenge itself, and force Pleasure to take its penalty—pain, in some shape or other."

It is unnecessary to multiply these fragments. To how many would L. E. L. write in this vein! reserving whatever was gloomiest in her views for her own secret meditations, or relieving her mind of its effects by venting it upon the world in verse. As a correspondent she was never disconsolate; she never "bestowed her tediousness" upon her friends, by taking up her pen in ill-humour. If she had her fits of moroseness, she had them in solitude; for there was no sign of asperity, in speech or writing, in her intercourse with the actual world in which she lived. To how many more persons would she address notes like those already described, expressing strong emotion in acknowledging even trivial service; and thanking them for kindness, as though she were not accustomed to rendering every species of kindness and to making all kinds of sacrifices herself. It was because this was the habit of her life, that she thus felt towards others when she experienced their good will. She always received praise as a tribute that laid her under special obligation to the giver; she could never say or do enough in return for it. She always received justice, not as a right, but as a favour.

1835 to 1837.

It was with the name of a being who was thus bent on seizing every occasion of cheerfulness, and every means of generosity, that slander was still occasionally busy in secret. Into the particular circumstances that led to an inquiry, at this period, and after the lapse of years, relative to the origin and diffusion of the scandal of which she had been the object, it is hardly necessary to enter at any length. Enough if it be here stated, that between herself and a gentleman with whom it had been for some time a pleasure to her to correspond and to converse, a literary intimacy and interchange of intellectual sentiment had ripened (as it was conjectured among their friends) into a closer and tenderer sympathy. Rumour connected their names, as names that were never again to be sundered; and a confirmation of the report that "L. E. L." would soon cease to be the designation of the literary favourite of the public, was anticipated by many. Perhaps it was this rumour of her intended marriage that revived in some quarters the recollection of the old slander, and reanimated prejudice against her. It is, at all events certain, that a resolution was, at this time, formed by two or three of her friends, to force the false speakers to speak out—to trace the report, if

possible, to its foul beginning—and compel an acknowledgment of its infamy from those who had idly or maliciously contributed to give circulation to it. The correspondence ended, in the satisfaction of all who were parties to it (men of opposite tempers and characters), that the falsehood was as vile as its fabrication was obscure. That even then, after years had elapsed, there was some show of reason for instituting an inquiry respecting the authorship, will, perhaps, be admitted, when the following letter, addressed by L. E. L., some time after the result of this inquiry, to Mrs. Thomson, has furnished incontestable, and surely most affecting evidence, that the sufferer was still suffering, and that her character was still exposed to the active assaults of error or of malice. Moreover, it was at her own demand that the correspondence was entered upon; although the shock occasioned by the bare thought of being made an object of inquiry consigned her to a bed of sickness. The subjoined, it will be seen, enters more fully than the last letter on the same painful subject, into the details of her life;—it is without date, but it was written in June, 1837.

"My dear Mrs. Thomson,

"You will, perhaps, wonder why I write when I am to see you so soon. I do it, because words are forgotten, and a letter remains; and what I

am about to say, is for reference as long as any interest about me remains with my friends;—an interest, I may be permitted to say, fully merited on my part.

"Dr. Thomson tells me of your kindly resenting the invidious remarks of which I was made the object.

"I will not thank you for what was only justice, but I do thank you for the spirit in which it was done. For such calumnies my own feeling is, the most utter disdain and disgust. My only answer is an appeal to every one who knows anything about me. Pardon me if there appear anything like self-ostentation, when I say I believe there are very few left to themselves, pressed by many difficulties on the one hand, and surrounded by every sort of flattery on the other, that would have acted, as I can fearlessly say I have done. What has my life been? one, quiet, very laborious, and inoffensive. I never have had a friend but what I made for myself, and I am not aware that I ever lost one through anything they ever saw reprehensible in my conduct. Who are my most intimate friends? those who have been such for years, and who have had the most constant opportunities of knowing me. I ask no one to take anything for granted, or only on my own assertion. I have lived all my life since childhood with the same people. The Misses Lance were strict, scrupu-

lous, and particular; moreover, from having kept a school so long, with habits of even minute observation. The affection they feel for me could scarcely be undeserved. I would desire nothing more than to refer to their opinion. Since then I have resided with Mrs. Sheldon, a lady prejudiced against me in the first instance; but what is her feeling now that I have lived with her for two years? That of affection almost as if I were a child of her own. What is also my actual position at this moment? Every day my acquaintance is courted; scarce a post but brings me a letter of admiration, and kindness. My very correspondence during the late election * is, perhaps, the most gratifying collection of cordial testimonials of respect to myself that was ever addressed to an individual. That I am the object often of malicious misrepresentation, or rather invention, is true; but it is not the public, it is not the general feeling.

* This reference is to the election of her brother, in 1836, to an office which he resigned immediately after her death. It was Sir Robert Peel's observation, on giving his vote, that "he was happy to mark his sense of Miss Landon's character and talents by voting for her brother;" while Mr. Hope, the son of the author of "Anastasius," said on the same occasion, "It is gratifying to have the means occasionally of showing both the reverence we feel for genius, and the gratitude to those who exercise it in our behalf." The election more than justified the proud feeling with which it is above referred to.

I can understand that success must bear the penalty of envy, but it is those who know nothing about me, or my habits, who are bitter against me.

" Take the very gentleman who permitted himself to ask a question the other night; what did he know about me? His sole authority rested on a hearsay, and that it might originate with a friend of my own, who, the moment she is asked, indignantly denies it. Miss R—— could not have said it, without the utmost injustice and falsehood, and I believe her to be incapable of either. Indeed I know that she has often expressed herself in the kindest manner about me. But she is not the first friend whose name has been taken in vain—the moment it reached their ears to meet with complete disavowal.

" To those who to indulge in a small envy, or a miserable love of gossip, talk away my life and happiness, I only say, if you think my conduct worth attacking, it is also worth examining. Such examination would be my best defence. From my friends, I ask brief and indignant denial, based only on their conviction of falsehood. As regards myself, I have no answer beyond contemptuous silence, an appeal to all who know my past life, and a very bitter sense of innocence and of injury.

" I have now, my dear Mrs. Thomson, nothing

more to say, beyond an earnest acknowledgment of all your kindness. I would not mix this with what is only a statement above; I have carefully shunned anything like an attempt to interest either your friendship or your feelings, but I may now be allowed to say how keenly they are felt. For years how much I have owed to Dr. Thomson's kindness! my pleasantest hours have been passed at your house, and the best encouragement of my literary labours has been derived from yourselves. God knows my path has been a very hard one! What constant labour, what unceasing anxiety! yet I never felt dejected till lately. But now I feel every day my mind and my spirits giving way; a deeper shade of despondency gathers upon me. I enter upon my usual employments with such disrelish; I feel so weary—so depressed; half my time so incapable of composition; my imagination is filled with painful and present images. But why should I say all this? perhaps my recent illness leaves behind it weakness both mentally and bodily; but I cannot help shrinking from either exertion or annoyance—I do not feel in myself power to bear either. I will not apologize for this intrusion upon you; I am sure you will not grudge the trouble of reading it, to

"Your grateful and affectionate

"L. E. LANDON."

The occasion that elicited this letter occurred,

as we have said, subsequently to the correspondence just adverted to. It proves that the inquiry was not entered upon altogether on light grounds; it shows, moreover, that the slander survived the correspondence, and appeared incapable of being effectually silenced. Yet the refutation which the evil report met, in the course of that investigation, was as effectual and complete as in the nature of such charges—charges so brought and circulated—it was possible to be. The refutation consisted in the utter disbelief in the charge, and the honourable zeal to detect the source of the calumny, that were everywhere evinced. It should be particularly marked, that the correspondence on this subject was not intended to be an inquiry into the truth of the accusation; *that*, so far from being deemed necessary by the parties to it, by any of her friends—more especially by that friend to whom she was then matrimonially contracted—would have been deemed by them all degrading to the last degree. There was never for an instant a shadow of suspicion upon their minds. Nothing they did in doubt, but all in honour. The sole object was to trace the false accuser, and drag him forward. This failing, the sense of the falsehood remained as strong as before—stronger it could not be, or it would have been strengthened by the result of the steps that had been taken for the detection of the calumniator.

What should follow, then, but the fulfilment of the marriage contract? As there was not the slightest scruple previously, on his own account, in the mind of the other party to that contract, so not the slightest scruple remained now as an impediment. The bare existence of such a scruple would, of course, have been fatal to her peace and happiness. There was none affecting her honour in the remotest degree. Yet the contract was broken off by her. However strong and deep the sentiment with which she had entered into it, she had the unflinching resolution to resist its promptings; and in the spirit of the communication at this period, between her and the gentleman to whom she was engaged, it is not difficult to perceive, that the same high-minded feeling on both sides, the same nice sense of honour, and the same stubborn yet delicate pride (neither, perhaps, discerning in the other the exact qualities that governed the conduct of both) so operated as to dictate a present sacrifice of affection, and the avoidance of a contract under the circumstances which had so controlled the parties to it.

The severity of the shock she underwent, and the extent of the self-sacrifice she deemed herself called upon by duty to make, may be inferred from the following letter addressed to him, with whom the contemplated union had now, she felt, become impossible. The handwriting gives painful evi-

dence of the agitation of mind and weakness of body amidst which it was composed. Its insertion is permitted here, at the request of her surviving relative, and of the writer to whom she confided the trust of doing justice to her memory. It must be received as the only explanation that can be offered of the feelings by which she was animated, and of the grounds on which she decided.

"I have already written to you two notes which I fear you could scarcely read or understand. I am to-day sitting up for an hour, and though strictly forbidden to write, it will be the least evil. I wish I could send you my inmost soul to read, for I feel at this moment the utter powerlessness of words. I have suffered for the last three days a degree of torture that made Dr. Thomson say, 'you have an idea of what the rack is now.' It was nothing to what I suffered from my own feelings. I look back on my whole life—I can find nothing to justify my being the object of such pain —but this is not what I meant to say. Again I repeat, that I will not allow you to consider yourself bound to me by any possible tie. To any friend to whom you may have stated our engagement, I cannot object to your stating the truth. Do every justice to your own kind and generous conduct. I am placed in a most cruel and difficult position. Give me the satisfaction of, as far as rests with

myself, having nothing to reproach myself with. The more I think, the more I feel I ought not—I cannot—allow you—to unite yourself with one accused of—I cannot write it. The mere suspicion is dreadful as death. Were it stated as a fact, that might be disproved; were it a difficulty of any other kind; I might say, look back at every action of my life—ask every friend I have—but what answer can I give, or what security have I against the assertion of a man's vanity, or the slander of a vulgar woman's tongue? I feel that to give up all idea of a near and dear connection, is as much my duty to myself as to you. Why should you be exposed to the annoyance—the mortification of having the name of the woman you honour with your regard, coupled with insolent insinuation?—you never would bear it.

"I have just received your notes. God bless you—but—

"After Monday I shall, I hope, be visible; at present it is impossible. My complaint is inflammation of the liver, and I am ordered complete repose, as if it were possible! Can you read this? Under any circumstances, the

"Most grateful and affectionate of
your friends,
"L. E. LANDON."

The conduct of the gentleman to whom this let-

ter was addressed, was throughout, and in every respect, worthy of the honourable appreciation it obtained, and of her who could thus feel and act towards him.

While forming this resolution upon principle, L. E. L. did not foresee that the impossibility of explaining her conduct to all who might hear of the dissolution of an engagement generally presumed to exist, was likely to expose her to the most mortifying and fatal misconception. The knowledge of the effect could carry with it no possible revelation of the cause. All that could be known beyond the small circle of her confidential friends was, that a correspondence had taken place with a view to the discovery of her traducer, and that it had terminated in the sudden breaking off of a connection of which the permanence seemed assured, and to which the marriage-seal was about to be affixed. The inference was much too fair for spite and ill-ill-nature to miss. The highmindedness of her decision, and the dignity of her whole conduct at this most trying and painful crisis of her life, could be judged of but by a few, while her seemingly unvindicated name might be a subject of scorn or of pity in every circle of gossips. That "very bitter sense of innocence and injury" which we have seen her entertaining, could avail her nothing against the presumption of the cold-hearted or the malicious, that "there might possibly be

something in it after all," as the inquiry had ended in a broken contract, a doubly embittered spirit, and a situation more lonely than before.

All this was what her experience told her, on reflection, she had too much reason to fear, and her judgment warned her at the same time of her utter helplessness, and the impossibility of guarding herself against such terrible misconceptions. She undoubtedly imagined the evil to be greater than it really was. But it must be owned that her own injudiciousness still exposed her to attacks; and that to persons of an irritable or over-credulous temper, she might easily become an object of suspicion and aversion, especially to her own sex. Her warmth of heart, her exuberance of gratitude, even on trivial occasions of service, her buoyant spirits, her recklessness as to consequences, and her stubborn indifference to opinion, were still, as before, her great enemies that created enemies; and when writing to authors, whom she had known and confided in for years, and in whom differences of age and the long-worn honours of the married lot, might have sufficed to guard her from all misapprehension, she was sometimes apt to lay aside the formalities of respect due to middle-aged husbands, and the reverence that belongs to the father of a numerous family.

She soon benefitted by the most kind and skil-

ful medical treatment, and the affectionate attention of her friends, so as to enjoy society again, and indulge to some extent in what she designated "the superfelicity of talking."

It was before the feeling alluded to, and before the dread of being misapprehended where her conduct could only be partially known or guessed at, had quite worn away, that she met Mr. George Maclean at the house of a mutual acquaintance at Hampstead. This was about October, 1836. Mr. Maclean was the eldest son of the Rev. James Maclean, of Urquhart, Elgin, and nephew to Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Maclean. He had early in life performed that exploit which, as we have seen, was the subject of L. E. L.'s childish speculations, a voyage to Africa; and had held, for a considerable time, the responsible appointment of Governor of Cape Coast Castle.

Of this gentleman, the following account has been given by a writer in a public journal, who professes to have known him since he was a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age, and who evidently retains a warm respect for him. When about the age mentioned, says the statement, "he was placed at the Elgin Academy, and boarded with the Rev. Mr. Duguid, the Latin teacher at that institution. As we resided at that time within a few houses of the academy, betwixt it and Mr. Duguid's resi-

sidence, we had excellent opportunities of witnessing the conduct of the boys, who were boarders, in their moments of relaxation as they passed to and from the school. On these occasions we noticed that Master Maclean was a very quiet boy, seldom entering into the sports of his companions with the same vivacity that they did. He was, what is emphatically named in the Scotch language, 'a douce laddie.' Some persons would have been apt to imagine that this arose from a sullen disposition or bad temper; but, on the contrary, it appeared to us to arise from 'deep thinking,' if we may be allowed to use the expression when alluding to a boy; for when the subject of conversation was congenial to his mind, he was in every respect as lively, as spirited, and as pleasant a companion as any person could wish, and possessed of much more intelligence than could have been expected from one of his age.

"When very young, we do not think he was eighteen years of age, he was appointed secretary to the Governor of Sierra Leone, and had not been long there when he was made governor himself. As a proof of his good disposition and kindness of heart, when he returned to his native country after being appointed governor, he selected and fitted out as his secretary, a young man, Mr. Wm. Topp, who had no claim whatever to his patronage; he

was merely an assistant or superintendant of Mr. Duguid's boarders when Mr. Maclean was at school.

" Mr. Maclean recently returned to England a second time, and after visiting his friends in the north, resided for a short period in London. We have seen him several times at the Craven Hotel, in the Strand, where he lodged, and he has called two or three times upon us, but in no instance have we found cause to alter the opinion we first formed of him. His elevation to be governor, when, from his personal appearance, he could not be looked upon in any other view than as a boy approaching to manhood, did not in the least alter his disposition." Other friends of Mr. Maclean speak of him in similar terms of respect and attachment; some even with enthusiasm; and all concur in acknowledging his conscientious attention to the duties devolving upon him.

In point of years there was no great disparity between the new acquaintances; and, although in general tastes they were little assimilated, and in manners still less so, as everybody must at once have noticed, there was at least one subject of deep interest to both, one ready topic of delightful conversation—African habits, African horrors, and African wonders—the sea, the coast, the desert, the climate, and the people. Even as a child such

themes had attractions for her, and where they were descanted on she was a child still. We can imagine L. E. L. as "seriously inclining" to listen to whatever might be said on such subjects, as the "gentle Lady," afterwards "married to the Moor," might hearken to the travel's history that charmed her, and to tales of antres vast and deserts idle. They met frequently; and as her respect for Mr. Maclean increased with the discovery of the zeal with which he had devoted himself to the interests of the colony he presided over, and the estimation in which he was held by the South African Company, so his admiration of her grew daily under the spell of her artless manners and brilliant conversation. The result was, after an intimacy of no long duration, the offer of his hand—and its acceptance!

Her friends heard with surprise the determination she had come to; indeed her consenting to take such a step seemed inexplicable, when it appeared that Mr. Maclean meditated resuming his official appointment at Cape Coast Castle, and that her marriage would be speedily followed by her departure from the shores of England. On what shores to find a home! To the husband such a change must be a magical one. What transition from gloom to gaiety, from cold and darkness to sunshine, could equal the possession of such a com-

panion in the eyes of one accustomed to a total deprivation of the society of European women. But to the wife—what a contrast!

It must here be observed, however, that, at the moment when, after a brief deliberation, L. E. L. accepted the offer of Mr. Maclean's hand, she had no reason to contemplate the surrender of a home in this country as the condition of her becoming a wife. The necessity of a voyage to Cape Coast, and a stay of some continuance, was mentioned no great while subsequent to her engagement to Mr. Maclean, and after much serious discussion it was courageously assented to. To a resolution once formed, she, for the most part, unwaveringly held —as she did to this.

It may be supposed that her thoughts upon this great change, and the separation from her family and friends, her voluntary exile to what every one called the grave of Europeans, were enough to occasion her many anxious days, and nights of unrefreshing sleep. But these were far from being all she had to endure. The attachment between the affianced parties had one characteristic of true love—its course did not run smooth. Doubts as to the prudence of the marriage, in a worldly, or in a pecuniary point of view, arose among some of Mr. Maclean's friends. His family always expressed the highest possible sense of Miss Landon's

worth, and took a just pride in her literary reputation. Respect for her virtues might, and no doubt did, suggest dissuasives; for any alliance, with a conditional residence at Cape Coast, must have been deemed, to the last degree, unpropitious. It is certain that during Mr. Maclean's absence, in Scotland, in the summer of 1837, it appeared doubtful whether the marriage would take place, nor did her health promise well, at that season, for her capability to undertake a long voyage, and settle, with the smallest chance of safety, in so horrible a climate.

At this time as well as afterwards—indeed, from the commencement of his acquaintance with her to the hour of her death, Mr. Maclean entertained but one feeling in relation to reports circulated to her prejudice. That feeling was contempt—contempt that never once wavered. However the report might be varied, or wherever it might be whispered, or whatever name might be associated with hers to her injury, he equally despised the tale. Not only had every thing been related to him, but all had been put to him in the worst light; again and again he was reminded, only to feel the more sympathy for the object of the calumny, and the more confidence in that innocence, of which, indeed, society—if that word must be used—felt equally assured by its unquestioning reception of

her. From first to last, he desired nothing more than an opportunity of vindicating her; and took every occasion to show how impossible it was to shake his steady faith in her truth and honour. This just confidence could not but be attended with some effects upon her feelings towards him in return. It could not but move her to look favourably upon his proposals, and to feel reconciled to the sacrifices she would be called upon to make.

On Mr. Maclean's return from Scotland in the autum of 1837, it became apparent that the engagement had not been broken off; and, for some time, nothing occurred to interrupt the feelings with which the parties looked forward to its fulfilment. But now, though Mr. Maclean had never felt a moment's doubt, or a moment's difficulty, about reports prejudicial to L. E. L., a rumour arose respecting himself, that seemed calculated to create some doubt and difficulty on her side. The rumour, as it reached the ears of some of her friends, was nothing less than the confident assertion that Mr. Maclean was already married—and that he had a native wife living at Cape Coast, who was then, or at least had been, the occupant of the Castle. Such was the statement confidently put forth, and in these terms it was made known to L. E. L. The shock and the alarm it occasioned her may be readily imagined; but

the feeling with which she heard it partially subsided, on communicating with Mr. Maclean, and receiving the explanation which he immediately and voluntarily gave on this serious point. She then learned (though on this subject her family never heard a word until after marriage) that no such matrimonial connection had ever existed; and no connection at all, that had not been terminated some considerable time before in a manner the most unequivocal and final. This statement was received in the spirit in which it was made; and there seemed to be no foolish and mistaken reserve on either side respecting the affair. Still the fact was supposed to remain—that circumstances occurring during Mr. Maclean's former residence at Cape Coast, although involving nothing whatever of the nature of a matrimonial bond, might, according to the views of that country, be seen in a very different light, and thus become a source of danger to the future mistress of the Castle. Mr. Maclean's explanation reduced the matter to this; but the apprehension of grave consequences could not be at once dismissed. Here was an obstacle which she could not possibly have anticipated when, in the preceding autumn, he had returned from Scotland, and their union was determined on. Now, the rumour of her intended marriage was widely spread. Preparations for it were not only in progress, but were actually far ad-

vanced; and, if destined to take place at all, it must take place within a very short time. The matter, notwithstanding, did not long remain with any exciting effect upon her mind. The subject was dismissed as soon as might be from recollection, as one scarcely worthy to be ranked among the many serious considerations which the meditated change so constantly presented.

To all other anxieties and sufferings must be superadded a dread lest the breaking off of this marriage-contract on the eve of its ratification, should have the cruel effect which she had anticipated from a similar event previously—that of appearing, in the false judgment of strangers who could not possibly know the real circumstances of the case, to throw some momentary colour of credit upon the tales of slanderers. This old familiar thought occasioned her far more pain than any fear of consequences likely to ensue from the bygone domestic arrangements of her intended husband.

Her health in spite of all improved; and every rumour, new and old, soon gave way to one of a more definite and authorised nature—that L. E. L. was to be married "almost" immediately to the Governor of Cape Coast Castle; and this rumour happened to be "almost" the only one that was not utterly without foundation.

It is now necessary to turn back, to trace the literary progress of L. E. L. during the period to which the events referred to belong. It was not less active and regular than in seasons more free from perturbation and ill-health. Gay or sorrowful, she wrote still, and her imagination shaped for itself about the same tasks, and expressed itself in the same tone, in both conditions.

The interest and admiration awakened in the spring of 1835 by the exhibition of Mr. Maclise's picture of the Vow of the Peacock, attracted L. E. L.'s attention to the subject as one on which her pen might be poetically employed. The brilliancy and power of the painting captivated her fancy, and kindled it to the production of an appropriate narrative, embodying something of the history as well as the romance of chivalry. "Vows on the heron," she observes, "on the pheasant, and the peacock, to do some deed of arms, were common in the olden time. My story, founded on this picturesque custom, is entirely fanciful, though its scenes and manners are strictly historical." This story was named after the picture it celebrated, and, with "other poems," formed an elegant volume, which was published in the autumn of 1835, by Messrs. Saunders and Ottley. It is worthy of being associated in recollection with the painter's genius. Independent of the tenderness, the passion, and deep interest of the leading subject, the

volume was recommended by its shorter pieces, consisting of a few classical sketches, a short series of tales, and some fugitive poems, of which the "Factory," the "Three Brothers," the "First Grave," the "Middle Temple Gardens," &c., are marked with great and various beauty. To this volume was prefixed an engraved portrait (the first ever published, we believe) of L.E.L., from a picture by the distinguished painter of the subject that had given birth to the poem. Though imperfect as a likeness, from its minuteness, it conveyed much of the character of her face, her general air and style, the simple and pretty turn of the head, and the easy fashion of her dress, as she might be seen some summer morning walking in the little garden of the house in Hansplace.

The publication of a lady's portrait must, in gallantry, be regarded as an "event" in her life; and to L.E.L.'s face, thus rendered visible to her readers for the first time, hundreds of curious eyes must have been turned in eagerness for the solution of the mystery that so long lay under the popular initials, now almost as well known as L.S.D. A string of "light fantastic" verses, expressive of this supposed feeling of interest and surprise at finding the literary enigma solved at last in the appearance of an elegant young lady, had the good fortune to please in an especial degree her who was the subject of them; and it is not, of course, be-

cause the writer presumes such a trifle to be worth reprinting, but solely because she used to quote a verse or two as the "most fanciful of all the compliments" paid to her, that he indulges himself with copying them here:—

ON FIRST SEEING THE PORTRAIT OF L. E. L.

"Is this the face that fired a thousand ships,
And burned the topless towers of Ilium!
Sweet Helen!"—MARLOWE.

"Ah, no! not Helen, Hel—e—n
Of old—but L. E. L.,
Those letters which the spell-bound pen
Have vainly sought to spell.

"Not Helen, who so long ago
Set Paris in a blaze;
But one who laid proud London low,
And lit up later days.

Is *this* your meaning, mystic Three!
Hand-writing on Fame's wall!
Ye thrice fair letters, can ye be
A lady, after all?

"How have I wonder'd what ye meant,
Ye alphabetic Graces!
And so you really represent
One of dear Nature's faces!

"How, how I 've guessed! your meaning rare
No guessing seemed to touch;
Ye riddles! the weird sisters ne'er
Bewitch'd me half so much.

" One knows the power of D. C. L.,
The grandeur of K. G.;
And F. R. S. will science spell,
And valour G. C. B.

" The sage, the schoolboy, both can tell
The worth of L. S. D.;
But, then, the worth of L. E. L!
All *letters* told in three!

" In vain I've sought to illustrate
Each letter with a word;
'Twas only trying to translate
The language of a bird.

" I've read ye, L. E. L., quite bare;
Thus—Logic, Ethics, Lays:
Lives, Episodes, and Lyrics fair—
I've guess'd away my days.

" One wild young fancy was the sire
Of fifty following after;
Like these—Love, Eden, and the Lyre,
Light, Elegance, and Laughter.

" I've drawn from all the stars that shine
Interpretations silly;
From flowers—the Lily, Eglantine,
And, then, another Lily.

" Now fancy 's dead; no thought can strike,
No guess, solution, stricture;
And L. E. L. is—simply like
This dainty little picture.

" Life to her lays! However Fame
'Mongst brightest names may set hers,
These three initials—nameless name—
Shall never be *dead letters!*"

L. E. L. had, previous to the publication of these poems, illustrated poetically a volume of the "Flowers of Loveliness" for Mr. Ackermann, and had, moreover, edited and enriched a "Book of Beauty" for Mr. Charles Heath. Besides her share in the origin of these annuals, she continued to contribute largely to others. The "Literary Gazette" still derived occasional advantage from her pen, and in the "Court Journal" she wrote uninterruptedly verse or prose, for about three years. The "New Monthly Magazine," however, of all periodicals, obtained by far the most finished of her poetical efforts; the subjects being her own, and not her publisher's. To these compositions reference will be made hereafter. Nor would it be right to omit the various graceful tributes to great names with which, from the year 1836, she annually added to the beauty of Mr. Schloss's "Fairy Almanac;" or her "Birth-day Tribute to the Princess Victoria," which appeared in May, 1837. Princesses have rarely been hailed in such hearty and passionate strains.

The spirit of her poetry during these later years, while retaining some of the early weaknesses that miscoloured and misdirected it, exhibited a progressive alteration that fully justified the impression stamped on the mind of one of her critics, some time before; relative to her capacity (of which

she was then giving some evidence) to escape from false shackles, and to discover, at last, the real exercise of her highest powers. This she may be said to have described in one of the many fine and lofty poems to be found in the "Drawing-room Scrap-book:"

"'Tis in the lofty hope, the daily toil,
'Tis in the gifted line,
In each far thought divine,
That brings down heaven to light our common soil.
'Tis in the great, the lovely, and the true,
'Tis in the generous thought
Of all that man has wrought,
Of all that yet remains for man to do,"

"Miss Landon," says her critic, "seems to have discovered, at last, that genius can have some nobler aim than to plant along the road of life an avenue of yews and cypresses. It may be that she has exhausted her varieties of melancholy phrase, and, in sheer necessity, begins to think, that there are other things to be adorned besides the sepulchre. There are, indeed. The purposes of life remain while life remains to us—the memory of what has been already done by man; and the thought of 'all that yet remains for man to do,' towards the realization of the happiness of the world. It is surely better to inspire us with the hope and the gladness of these things, than to teach us how to realise a 'vale of tears,' by shedding them."

The reviewer proceeds, with great truth and justice, to say, "In the verses of Miss Landon, moreover, there is always something, cover it as she may with her sombre veil, more nearly akin to cheerfulness than to sorrow. She would seem to have taken to mourning, as the only relief from too great a capacity for enjoyment, and the melancholy that is born of this, perhaps contains 'a joy beyond joy.' It is quite certain, at all events, that the grief which pours itself forth, like the melodious melancholy of this young lady, in one rapt and perpetual note, has *more in it of the imaginative than the real, of the luxuriating than the suffering.* And after all, this is only teaching us how best to grieve, when we want to know what most to enjoy. We are grateful to her, therefore, for reconsidering that matter, and we would promise her a much loftier place in poetry than she occupies now, if we thought her courage equal to her genius; a far better name in the aftertime, if we thought she could teach herself to care less about the present. Fear, and doubt, and dependence, and carelessness, and (we must add) too great a passion for *effect*, still hang about her."

Even these latter failings diminished, however, as she proceeded; she became every year less doubting, more independent, far more careful and studious; the "passion for effect" was not the least weakened, but it slowly gave way.

And here, while stating our impressions of the development of her own poetical powers, a few brief notes, glancing at the qualities of some of her great contemporaries, may not be inappropriately introduced. Worthy, from their expressiveness, of preservation in themselves, they serve to illustrate her own intellectual qualities by showing what, at this time, when she was, perhaps, most capable of forming a calm and sound judgment, her feeling really was, respecting the poets she has thus characterised in writing to a friend.

SOUTHEY. There is something in Southey's genius that always gives me the idea of the Alhambra—there is the great proportion, and the fantastic ornament. The setting of his verses is like a rich arabesque. It is fretted gold; the oriental magnificence of his longer poems—such as Thalaba—is singularly contrasted with the quaint simplicity of his minor poems; they give the idea of innocent, yet intelligent children—yet almost startling you with the depth of knowledge that a simple truth may convey.

WORDSWORTH is a poet that even Plato might have admitted into his republic. He is the most passionless of writers. Like the noblest creations of Grecian sculpture, the divinity is shown by divine repose. But if his sympathy with humanity

be still, it is also deep; the 'heaven that lies about us in our infancy, he would fain extend even to the tomb. He brings 'Faith, the solemn comforter,' and the belief that even in things evil exists the soul of good.

Of all poets SHELLEY is the most poetical:

> 'Love was born with him, in him, so intense,
> It was his very being, not a sense.'—

The defect of his imagination was a want of being sufficiently balanced with the real; everything appeared to him through an exaggerated medium. He reasoned with his feelings; now feelings are the worst possible reasoners—they excite, and they mislead. He saw evil and sorrow, and believed too easily in redress: he was too young to make allowance—that first step in true philosophy—and fancied that to defy a system was to destroy it. It was a boy's error, who believes he is judging when he is only learning. Shelley's versification has a melody peculiarly its own. It can only be described by similitudes. It suggests the notes of some old favourite song—the sound of falling waters, or the murmurs of the wind among the branches. There is a nameless fascination in some sweet human voices, and there is the same in many of the shorter poems of Shelley.

SCOTT is the epic poet of chivalry. His verses, read aloud, have the same effect as that splendid

composition in the *Puritani*, '*Sona la Tromba.*' They awaken all that is active and martial in your nature. His narrative never flags; it is like a horse at full gallop—you have all the excitement of exercise. Take the combat between Roderick Dhu and Fitzjames—you do not read it, you see it—you watch the warriors, and hold your breath —you are yourself inclined

> 'To falter thanks to Heaven for life,
> Redeem'd unhoped from desperate strife.'

Under the title of "Traits and Trials of Early Life," Mr. Colburn published, in 1836, a small volume of prose stories for children. To those who direct the new class of readers she here sought to gratify and inform, rather than the youthful readers themselves, she stated her object to be, "to interest, rather than to amuse, to excite the imagination through the softening medium of the feelings." Sympathy, she remarks, is the surest destroyer of selfishness. There is a wide field indeed opened for the exercise of this virtue in the first and longest of her narratives, the history of two little wingless angels, called "The Twin Sisters;" but though a tale of singular beauty, and abounding in exquisite traits of character and examples of purest virtue, it is saddening even to pain. The author justifies this by saying, "I endeavour to soften the heart by a kindly regret

for unmerited sorrow. The very youngest ought to know how much there is to endure in existence; it will teach them thankfulness in their own more fortunate lot, and meekness in bearing their own lighter burthens." The other tales are not less charmingly written, and they have the advantage of being more cheerful, showing, for the most part, how exertion, under difficulties, is rewarded by success. The maxim which was remembered when they were composed seems to have been, that early lessons of cheerful endurance cannot be better taught than by example; and that patience, fortitude, and affection, are ever strong in obtaining a mastery over the troubles that beset us, at whatever age or in whatever condition.

From the Reminiscences of her own Childhood, and the interesting romance she had built upon them, as contained in the fanciful history which closes the volume just mentioned, we turn to some reminiscences far more real and true, though recorded in verse; to a little poem, written in the spring of this year, and expressive of the fond and gentle feelings with which she ever turned to the scene whose loveliness it pictures in such simple colours. If it merited publication for no other reason, it might claim it for the sweetness of the reflections suggested to her by revisiting a spot endeared to her by friendships retained to the last hour of her life, and comforting her always from the first

moment of their commencement. The poem refers to a visit to some valued friends, under whose roof the last months of her stay in England were passed. They were now residing chiefly in a beautiful spot at a short distance from the metropolis. To them, even at this time, L. E. L. was indebted for many of "those happy hours" which she in these verses alludes to; to the kind and sympathising mistress of that house, she was even then under obligations for advice and for affection, to her of inestimable value; and from the family by whom that lady was surrounded, she received attentions and kindnesses that sprang not simply from admiration, but from real regard—not from delight in her talents merely, but from a confidence in her worth. The advantages she, at this, and at an earlier season, derived from her intimacy with this family increased month by month, and they were repaid with a true and steady attachment. This will be presently found recorded in a "farewell," a poem written upon resigning their generous protection, and quitting a country which she loved better for their sakes.

HAPPY HOURS.

Where are they—those happy hours,
Link'd with everything I see,
With the colour of the flowers,
With the shadow of the tree!

Still the golden light is falling,
As when first I saw the place;
I can hear the sweet birds calling
To their young and callow race.

Still the graceful trees are bending,
Heavy with the weight of bloom,
Lilac and laburnum blending
With the still more golden broom;
Still the rosy May hath bowers
With her paler sister made;
Where, where are the happy hours
I have pass'd beneath their shade?

Ah! those hours are turn'd to treasures
Hidden deep the heart within;
That heart has no deeper pleasures
Than the thought of what has been.
Every pleasure in remembrance,
Is like coined gold, whose claim
Rises from the stamp'd resemblance
Which bestows a worth and name.

Still doth memory inherit
All that once was sweet and fair,
Like a soft and viewless spirit
Bearing perfume through the air;
Not a green leaf, doom'd to wither,
But has link'd some chain of thought—
Not a flower by spring brought hither,
But has some emotion brought.

Let the lovely ones then perish,
They have left enough behind,
In the feelings that we cherish,
Thoughts that link'd them with the mind.
Summer haunts of summer weather,
Almost is it sweet to part;
For ye leave the friends together,
To whom first ye link'd my heart.

May 31, 1836.

L. E. L.'s next prose publication was "Ethel Churchill," the work, unquestionably, in which her powers, as a novelist, are seen to the greatest advantage. This appeared in the same year. The principal portion of it was written in wretched health, but it needs no apology. "To show the necessity of a strong and guiding principle; to put in the strongest light, that no vanity, no pleasure, can ever supply the place of affection—to soften and to elevate,"—this was the object of her story. In detailing it, she acknowledges her inability to work out her own ideal, but feels that it is the beautiful and the true. Thus explaining it, L. E. L. makes a short confession, which is interesting, as indicative of her literary anxiety, and a deepened sense of moral responsibility. "I cannot," she says, "understand a writer growing indifferent from custom or success. Every new work must be the record of much change in the mind which produces it, and there is always the anxiety to know how such change will be received. *It is impossible, also, that the feeling of your own moral responsibility should not increase.* At first you write eagerly; composition is rather a passion than a power; but, as you go on, you cannot but find that, to write a book, is a far more serious charge than it at first appeared. Faults have been pointed out, and you are desirous of avoiding their recurrence; praise has been bestowed, and you cannot but wish to show that it has not been given

in vain. Encouragement is the deepest and dearest debt that a writer can incur. Moreover, you have learnt that opinions are not to be lightly put forth, when there is even a chance of such opinions being *matériel*, wherewith others will form their own. I never saw any one reading a volume of mine without almost a sensation of fear. I write every day more earnestly and more seriously."

It would be absurd to say that there are not interwoven with the beauties that compose this story of the "Two Brides," some of those mistaken views of life to which allusion has already been made; some of those perversities that so frequently marred the effect she aimed at producing. We discover the random-shafts and the two-edged swords of argument that so often administer a heedless wound just as the willing soul has been "lapped in Elysium." There are a few sarcasms and sentiments delivered by the author in person that would have fallen better from one or two of the characters of her story. They would have told admirably in dialogue, but they have "no business there," as forming a portion of the author's feelings and reflections. By this error a beauty here and there is converted into a blemish. It must also be owned that though there is no perceptible effort or straining at effect, either in the conversational or the narrative parts of the story, there is observable in both, occasionally, a fondness for saying

fine things and for epigrammatic point of expression—to the sacrifice of propriety and truth. But even in these minor respects the work is most advantageously contrasted with all else she has written in prose. The whole course and character of it shows that she had written it with matured powers, and an increased "feeling of moral responsibility."

The story is a love story—a phrase that means much or little; in the present instance is included in it much that belongs to its sweetest and loftiest signification. We think of it, after we have read, and seem to have grown older, more observant, and more experienced, in a few hours. This is the natural effect of the truth with which the author has treated some of the greatest of human passions—exposed the most fearful of our responsibilities, the most sacred of our duties, the most humiliating of our infirmities. And beyond a doubt this truth was the natural result of mature experience on the writer's side, a more perfect mastery of the will, and additional power of taming the "wild heart" of her imagination to the "loving hand" of sympathy. The era of Pope, of Lady Mary, of Kneller, Wharton, Walpole, Peterborough—the era of the Curlls and Lintots—is here revived and restored. The most varied powers are requisite to the painting of such portraitures, to the keeping of such a picture, to the flinging so many opposing minds into dramatic and cha-

racteristic action, giving them thought, passion, language, motion. How excellent is the Twickenham scene! Lady Mary lives again, and we feel that we have loitered with Pope in his own garden. Walpole's character had been scanned with a close and critical eye, that saw not merely the manners and action, but much of the policy and philosophy of the time: there is scarcely one portrait that does not exhibit marks of studious painting and insight into humanity. On the character and career of Maynard, she lavished her pains freely, and the result rewarded her. Old Sir Jasper is a creature made up of life's light and shadow: Marchmont, Norbourne, Courtenay—the several groups of authors, actors, booksellers and loungers, are full of life, spirit, and ease. Still more deep and beautiful is the work in the delineation of female character. We feel this whether we glance at the mingled colours that compose the "web of life" in which the dazzling Henrietta moves, or at the lovely gentleness and affecting devotion of Constance; at the blended calmness and fervour, the subdued heart and sustained pride of the injured Ethel, or at the wit and selfishness of Lady Mary; at the hidden consciousness of Mrs. Courtenaye, or not least, the true affection, elevating and giving winningness to a coarse nature, that renders Lavinia Fenton one of the reader's chief favourites. All these charac-

ters, heads or full lengths, are pourtrayed with a hand bold to execute what the eye sees in life or in life's visions, and what the heart feels to belong to the mysteries of our nature.

The approach to the end is too painful; the fearful poisoning scene, the madness worse than death, the poetical aim and the moral hope struck down in the midst of a blighting and squalid poverty—these have the stunning effect of a blow. But the general effect is not painful—the personages of the story are not "sad as night only for wantonness"—our most sacred feelings are not sported with—tears are not set flowing out of an ostentatious sense of the pathetic, nor is humanity fastened on the rack merely to show us what it can endure, and how high the torture can be screwed up. The book will keep its readers "heart-whole" with the world, while it unsparingly exhibits its follies and its vices.

"Ethel Churchill," moreover, contains a little volume of verses, beautifully scattered through the work as mottos to the chapters; a liberality denoting, perhaps, that L. E. L.'s activity of thought and keenness of feeling could create, where other minds reposed on a quotation; and could produce a sweet song, while another novelist was turning over her own poetical pages for an appropriate extract. It has been deemed right to collect some of these mottos in the present work; and the series

will not be lightly regarded by the reader who takes the subjoined as a specimen. Allowing, perhaps, for a superfluous dash of bitterness, Coleridge might have written it, smiling complacently on his work:—

"Not with the world to teach us, may we learn
The spirit's noblest lessons. Hope and Faith
Are stars that shine amid the far-off heaven,
Dimm'd and obscured by vapours from below.
Impatient selfishness, and shrewd distrust,
Are taught us in the common ways of life.
Dust is beneath our feet, and at our side
The coarse and mean, the false and the unjust;
And constant contact makes us grow too like
The things we daily struggle with, and scorn.
Only by looking up can we see heaven!"

Upon the completion of "Ethel Churchill" L. E. L. devoted herself to another work in prose, one which she had long meditated, and for which she had great requisites; that series of descriptive and critical essays on the female characters of Scott, which appears in these volumes. Two or three of them were printed separately, as they were written, in the "New Monthly Magazine" (they have since been revised), and an arrangement was then made with Mr. Charles Heath to publish these sketches in a volume, to be illustrated according to the fashion of the time. This design, in which she took so deep an interest, pursuing it steadily to the last, she did not live to complete; but what the work would have been may be judged of

from the analyses of passion, truth, and beauty, now submitted to the public.

But there was one object which had, from a still earlier period, engaged her serious thoughts occasionally, and made her sigh for a fair opportunity of accomplishing it; an object to which, it must be confessed, the bent of her genius, and the habits of her life, did not appear eminently favourable, and which her ambition, perhaps, perceived but a weak hope of achieving with the highest degree of success. Yet, in the order of writing to which her aspirations now pointed, she knew that not the second ground merely, but the third or the fourth, was yet a high one; and that, with such a sense of greatness as then possessed her, her failure could not be inglorious. She wished most passionately, in short, to write a tragedy. The circumstances of the time concurred to favour her desire. She required some bold change in the character of her literary tasks to excite her at that period to their adequate fulfilment; and the agents and action of a tragedy seemed best of all calculated to arouse her from a state of painful self-consciousness, and transport her from the fretfulness and the littleness of actual life into the "calm pleasures and majestic pains," the interest and vastness, of the past. Above all, Mr. Macready had then, in the autumn of 1837, just commenced the working of his great practical experiment for the reformation

of the stage. His devotion to a fine cause, while all could not appreciate it, demanded from those who could, proofs of sympathy and co-operation. With feelings such as these she resolved to commence; doubtful of her own powers, but sure of her advantages—conscious that she appealed, not to the great actor merely, but to the accomplished critic, and to the generous and accessible manager.

She chose a subject, new doubtless to the stage, but not strikingly fitted for it in such hands as her own—the fortunes of "Castruccio Castrucani." It was commenced and carried through, as almost all her writings were, too inconsiderately; though the few days, perhaps, which she devoted to deliberation and forethought, seemed to her an eternity, because they *were* days instead of hours. Impatient to begin, she was at least as impatient to end; and she proceeded, apart from mistakes of a higher though hardly more important kind, with far too little regard to the necessities that govern scenic representation. She committed the error of supposing that her audience, with one accord, would jump as intuitively to conclusions as she did, and that the truth, which was palpable to her own eyes, would be equally visible to the eyes of an unseeing pit. Before it was quite finished, she discovered the unfitness of its plan for the stage of such a theatre as Covent-garden, not to say for such an audience

as would assemble anywhere; and she instantly and earnestly set about the toilsome work of reconstruction and improvement, making many essential additions, and then altering again. She thus alludes to the subject in a letter addressed to us at the close of the year: "I have not sent you my tragedy so soon as I said, because I would not hurry a single line, or neglect the least of your hints. I have lengthened it, given the heroine more speeches, remodelled the character of *Arizzi*, and brought out that of *Leoni*, together with the addition of two or three scenes. I am ashamed to tell you how nervous and how anxious I am." But further revision was necessary, and by this time the arrangements for the season were complete, even had the chance of the play's success upon the stage been strong enough to justify its production. Its publication now, enables the dramatic critic to pass sentence upon the attempt; and to that judgment it is committed, in the confident hope that where high aims are visible, and fine powers energetically, though unavailingly, exercised for their accomplishment, there can be no hasty or indiscriminate condemnation.

The completion of her "Drawing-room Scrap-book," and the fulfilment of other minor engagements, occupied all her literary time until the period of her marriage, and her consequent departure for the African shores.

1837 and 1838.

MRS. SHELDON, the lady with whom L. E. L. had resided in Hans'-place, after the retirement of the Misses Lance, removed, in 1837, to Upper Berkeley-street, Connaught-square, West.

Just previous to her leaving Hans'-place, L. E. L. experienced a world of domestic trouble; but it was of no very heart-rending kind; at least the account which she gave of it is not at all in her pathetic style. The reader may judge for himself —and of her good spirits when on the eve of quitting the old house which had been her home so long.

"Do you, my dear Mr. Blanchard, know any person in want of a 'young woman, sober, honest, and good-tempered,' 'would not object to waiting on a single gentleman?' If you do, for mercy's sake recommend me. For the last fortnight I have been qualifying for the situation. Everybody has been ill and in bed but myself; one servant gone home, the other turned out at a moment's notice for too great devotion to 'ardent spirits,' and we were left alone!—desolate as Babylon, or the ruins of Palmyra. I have run about with a saucepan of gruel in one hand, and a basin of broth in the

other. I have not yet lost the keys, and have only broken one candlestick. I hope my patients are recovering, and then I shall leave the kitchen for the attic, when you shall have the first-fruits of my return. We move sometime next week—I believe, to 28, Upper Berkeley-street, West."

The next day she wrote—"We move in a week. I have somethoughts (two words, the last, though joined) of writing a farewell ode to Hans'-place."

Her unusual exertions in comforting the sick, and waiting on the servantless, ended in lassitude—or, to use her own words, downright stupidity; for before the week was over, arrived a note excusing the non-fulfilment of some literary engagement, for the fruits of which we were anxiously waiting. As it is a novelty and brief, we copy it—

"This has been a very Viola week—

"What is its history?
A blank, my lord."

I literally have been too stupid to write, but I have refused to dine out to-day, on purpose to do something for you to-night; at least I shall try, and, if I succeed, send it early to-morrow. As there are no books, I have made several extracts from the magazines. Yours very truly, stupid

"L. E. L."

"I have some thoughts of advertising for myself—at least for my better part, my ideas."

Before we accompany L. E. L. to her new resi-

dence, let us indulge the hope of entertaining the reader with another specimen or two of her correspondence, which belong to an earlier date, but did not reach us in time to be inserted in due order. The subject here appears to be a wedding.

"Twice, my dearest ——, when I have been about writing, finding I had been forestalled by ——'s prolific pen, and knowing nothing is so tedious as a tale twice told, I have delayed my infliction till our news had either been told long enough to be forgotten, or something actually new had occurred. Expect from me only such a letter as might be published in the fashions for the month. I have lived in an atmosphere of silk, where the earth was satin, and the sky was blonde. Skirts in full plaits all round are no longer connected in my mind with a Dutchwoman. I despise any dress whose circumference is not like that of Grosvenor-square; by-the-by, I made the other day a suggestion, for which I have some thoughts of taking out a patent—we have all heard of beds inflated with air, (would it not be very poetical sleeping in them, like reclining on a cloud?) could not the invention be advantageously employed in dress?—indeed, I have no doubt that a petticoat trimmed with fixed air will be indispensable. Nothing has saved me from having a bilious fever, *i. e.* a nervous one, *i. e.* an envious one, but that one pretty thing has put another out of my head.

In the multitude of dresses, as of councillors, there has been safety—who ever heard of dying for love of a dozen? and I really cannot make up my mind which dress to prefer. I have, however, come to this conclusion, that it would be a very fine thing to be married if it were not for the husband! . . . . I had a most delightful visit to Tunbridge Wells, where I passed two days, both in going and returning, at ——'s, whose name you will, no doubt, recollect as one of our sweetest poets; his wife is such a lovely creature. Do you remember a poem of mine, about three weeks ago, in the "Gazette," called "Elise?" I can assure you it is but a faint description of her. I met at their house the author of "May you Like it," and "The Human Heart," three volumes of the most exquisite tales in the English language; if you have not read them, you have a treat to come; pray notice my two especial favourites, "The Childhood of Charles Spenser," and "The Ladye Amoret, a romance." * *

I am sure, my dearest ——, I must say with the song, 'There is no place like home;' for, on my return, I found the most charming of parcels awaiting me. It was too much at once—as to the dress, I think that I never saw anything more beautiful. I am going to a very gay breakfast in Park-lane this week, and was turning in my mind that most important subject, costume;

and now I have the very prettiest I could ever have imagined—all the hearts it captivates I shall put in my bag, and I am sure they must be satisfied. I am so much obliged to ——'s, and your fingers for it. . . . .

"I am sure, for the last three days, I might have been exhibited to idle apprentices, instead of George Barnwell; I mean as an example of industry—not having had, nor having, the slightest intention of murdering any of my uncles. But I do want 'a small piece of pleasure;' so will you drink an early tea with me to-day? then you may go away in time for tea at home—it will be a great charity."

"What can I say in the way of gratitude to you? I never saw anything prettier than the caps—and I put this in a little modest parenthesis (I never had anything so becoming). I have not gone to the desperate extent of having my head shaved—my courage failed when it came to that last and desperate remedy; but I have done what is nearly as bad, I have had my hair cut short to curl. Truly after having been so little accustomed to any trouble, with only bands that were smoothed in a moment, I had not calculated on the martyrdom of curls. I used to be indifferent to damp-days—defied wind and rain. Now, I look to change of weather like a farmer or a sailor, and have the exclamation 'dear, what a bad day it is

for the hair!' perpetually on my lips. So your caps are not only beautiful, but useful." . . . .

"Did I live within walking distance, had I a carriage of my own, or a fairy for a god-mother, who would kindly turn a pumpkin and lizards into coach and horses, or had I Prince Huissein's carpet, I should, before this, have paid you a visit—however, there being no truth in old proverbs, especially the one which says, 'where there's a will there's a way,' I must content myself with a few lines. After finishing any work, I have always a little mental interregnum, and feel as if I had not an idea left in the world—it takes me sometime to make up my mind what I shall do next. Amid so many projects as I always have floating in the future, it is no easy task to fix on what shall be the next; however, pray tell ——— I am not yet come to my treatise on moral philosophy. I beg to state that we had an apple-pie for dinner to-day, my last and only unsophisticated taste. You had beautiful weather for your Oxford excursion; pray, was not ——— greatly delighted with all the old halls and towers? I should think that the autumn foliage would have a beautiful effect in the Christchurch meadows, which, by-the-by, were overflowed when I was there." * * *

In Upper Berkeley-street L. E. L. had her home for a few months, when at the earnest desire

of friends to whom she was much attached, she consented to take up her abode under their hospitable roof in Hyde-park-street. Here she remained in the enjoyment of every possible kindness. The year, 1838, commenced happily for her. Yet a joyous note which she wrote to us at this season opens with the announcement that she was "still on strict regimen, and under Dr. Thomson's care." But that was nothing. "I am gaining strength," she says, "and being really better every day. Perhaps one great reason why I am so recovered is, that I am so much happier. God knows, that even at this very moment I am sufficiently involved in all sorts of business-perplexities and anxieties; but for these I have always found a remedy in my own exertions. All the misery I have suffered during the last few months is past like a dream—one which, I trust in God, I shall never know again. Now, my own inward feelings are what they used to be. You would not now have to complain of my despondency." And then she rapturously expatiates on the good opinions that "Ethel" was winning for her in some quarters, and on the praises of her friends, exclaiming—

> "I on honey-dews have fed,
> And breathed the airs of Paradise."

The coming event, however, joyous as its character should be, cast a gloomy shadow before; for, as often as it was thought of, came the dark

outline of the wild and far-off coast to which the summer months must see her voyaging. But at length the time was approaching when it would be necessary for Mr. Maclean to set sail for the scene of his official duties; and, with the arrival of that season, came the marriage-morning—the 7th of June, 1838. The affair, however, was a secret; Mr. Maclean's wishes being strongly expressed for a private wedding. Few, indeed, of the closest friends on either side knew anything of the event, until a fortnight after it had occurred. L. E. L. was married to Mr. Maclean at St. Mary's, Bryanstone-square; the marriage-ceremony being performed by her brother, the Rev. W. H. Landon. The bride was given away by Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, whose genius she admired, whose friendly sympathy she had long enjoyed, and whose good opinion she ever highly prized. After a few days spent out of town, the marriage was publicly announced, and Mr. and Mrs. Maclean returned to the house of their hospitable friends, where they remained until it became necessary to repair to Portsmouth.

The vessel was expected to sail by the end of the month, and various arrangements for the happiness of others (ever that on which her own depended) remained to be concluded. Her thoughts were especially directed to provisions necessary to her mother's comfort, and her efforts were not un-

successfully employed. An engagement with Mr. Colburn for another novel, and contributions to his magazine—that with Mr. Heath, relative to the Female Characters of Scott—and the hope of some success for her tragedy—partially removed her anxiety on the score of those to whom her exertions had hitherto been necessary. Of the "Drawing-room Scrap-book" it was not so easy to retain the editorship; about this she was to the last exceedingly anxious; and this anxiety is referred to here, that the reader may perceive how she had calculated on continuing her literary exertions during the time she should be away, and how she allowed herself no rest while she had a duty to others to discharge. Each of these engagements, in her new position in life, would help her to accomplish one of the first wishes of her heart. "How much shall I write in three years!" was her exclamation to us;—for it should be stated, that her stay in Africa was expressly limited to three years, unless her own choice, at the end of that term, decided otherwise. It must also be observed, that her husband left all her literary arrangements, and the income arising from them, entirely in her own hands. She was unshackled by any stipulation whatever.

This feeling of independence, and the hope founded on it of ensuring independence to another, gave no slight colouring of happiness to her future prospects. There still remained some nervous

fears about the climate (discovered to be, in her case, groundless on her arrival), but these were checked, as much as possible, by the reflection that she should be free to return in three years. About to part, she felt at peace with all, and enjoyed the confidence that her character would outlive all calumnies. To this must be added, the comfort derived from the reflection, that not one word had been uttered to her prejudice up to this hour that was not distinctly known to her husband. With every calumny, every report "however cruel and untrue" (to use her own expression), Mr. Maclean had been made acquainted; there was no concealment of anything on her side; and, on his, just as little concealment of the honourable spirit in which he disregarded scandal.

The warmth of her affection for the lady with whom she was staying, is shown in the following note, addressed to her during a temporary absence in May. It is here inserted, as indicating the feelings with which she must have contemplated the coming separation.

"My dearest Mrs. ———, I could not dine with an M.P. yesterday and not get a frank for you.—I am writing in your room—how desolate it seems; I look round and keep fancying you must be there, till at last I have turned the table, that I may not see your sofa. The drive to —— was beautiful, so was the garden which looked upon the river—spring has just now its few loveliest days;

leaves half out of that soft yellow green, while the fruit trees are just opening their blossoms. Our party was joined by a very celebrated German, Mr. Champollion, the first Sanscrit scholar in the world.—I cared more for Mr. Bruce, the same who helped Lavalette to escape. Lord —— only came to make his excuse—one of his servants had the scarlet fever, and you yourself could not have been hurrying off with more anxiety than he was on account of his dear children.—Mrs. ——'s little girls looked like so many pictures on the lawn.—My poor dear tragedy is now gone to Mr. Bulwer, we shall hear what he says. Pray come back—we cannot do without you. I knew how you would be missed, but even I did not know how much."

Every arrangement for departure having been finally concluded, a few of her friends assembled, on the evening of the 27th of June, to take their leave of her; and, on the 5th of July, the ship "Maclean," having the governor and his lady on board, sailed from Portsmouth for Cape Coast.

Her last affectionate adieus to her brother, though tender and mournful indeed, for it was the parting of two persons fondly attached to each other, were not without the animation that springs out of courage, hope, and a high and solemn sense of duty. She derived a feeling of fortitude from the knowledge that she carried with her from the land she loved, if not the "whole world's good wishes,"

yet the good wishes of numbers whom the world justly delighted to honour. Nor was this an illusion.

" Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue "

than mere intellectual superiority obtains, were hers; the blessings and prayers that comfort the innocent heart, and reward the self-sacrificing spirit.

In the simple statement contained in the following letter, all the particulars of her last hours in England, and of the mournful parting, are placed before the reader, with an affection which he will appreciate, and with an interest which he will share.

October 27, 1840.

" MY DEAR BLANCHARD,

" In desiring me to relate to you, unimportant though they may be, such incidents as I remember of the few last hours that my sister passed in England; you have set me a mournful but not a very difficult task—nothing she then said or did was likely to be forgotten by me.

" In order that we might have her among us a day or two longer, it had been arranged that she was to go on board the vessel which was to carry her to Africa at Portsmouth, but when the letter came to tell of its arrival there, further delay was impossible. Mr. Hugh Maclean and I were to accompany her. We were to travel by railway as far

as might be, and then post on. But parting with her friends was no easy matter, and we arrived at the station a little too late. By way of disposing of the three hours' interval which we had to wait for the next train, I recommended that we should go to the quarters which she had procured for me, at the Literary Fund Chambers, and take some coffee. 'Very well,' she said, 'for if I return to Hyde-park-street, I wo'nt answer for not keeping you too long a second time.' The rapidity with which, for the first time, she was whirled along a railway, suited exactly with the excitement of her feelings; she laughed, and asked Mr. Maclean 'why don't you have them in Africa?' She grew weary during the posting part of the journey, and was sleeping, I remember, with her head leaning on my shoulder, when one of the forewheels threatened to go to pieces, and obliged us to get out and wait till another was borrowed. On arriving at Portsmouth we found Mr. Hugh Maclean, who had not been too late for the first train, on the look out for us. She was cheerful enough at dinner, but her spirits had been tried too much during the day, not to be entirely exhausted at night, and I believe every one of us was anxious to be alone, and to get rest, if we could.

On returning from a stroll on the ramparts early the next morning, I found her already up and sitting on a hassock, on the floor, with the

window-seat for a desk, busy writing a number of little farewell notes. Mr. Maclean did not rise till very late, but his brother soon joined us. — At breakfast, though her spirits were renewed, yet she had not all her usual liveliness, and when she spoke of the friends she was leaving, it was with a deeper tone of affection; and the fantastic spirit of adventure with which she always parried every fact connected with going to Africa, did not show itself. She was full of the future—of her own, and ours. She liked Mr. Hugh Maclean, and gave him much playful advice, and myself a hundred cautions. She dwelt frequently on the great solace which the execution of her literary plans would be to her, and felt pride and pleasure at the prospects of her continued connection with this country; she said, how deeply shall I value praise when I am away! Her literature was to be her refuge in solitude. 'What will you do without friends to talk to?' 'Oh!' she said, 'I shall talk to them through my books.' The present, as it concerned herself, seemed to have but little place in her mind—she was all future.

Her note writing was resumed immediately after breakfast, and this, with a little talk between perhaps every note, occupied the whole of her last morning in England. Let me here say a word of explanation on this point, which I would gladly have meet the eye of her friends. These

notes were confided to me, and most of them were to be accompanied by some little memorial, a book, a portrait, one of Schloss's almanacks, or some other trifling token from her, a list of which she intended to furnish me with, but which, in the hurry of departure, she had not time to complete. I found but a very few names on the unfinished list, and was at a sad loss what to send with the notes; and I am grateful to those who did her the honour to inquire after what she named in any of them.

"The morning passed in anxious uncertainty at what hour the vessel was to sail, and it was not till the afternoon that the summons came. We were to dine on board the brig. I remember, while seated on the deck of the cutter which took us out to Spithead, she gave me her purse, said she should not want it where she was going, and added, laughing, 'Mind you take as much care of it as I ever have!' I gave my promise for the purse only, but I took her meaning literally, and both purse and contents have been sacred. As soon as Mr. Maclean stepped on board, the crew fired a salute, a compliment to which her ears were little accustomed. On going down into the cabin she was surprised at the change which the vessel had undergone since she saw it in London; and, indeed, nothing that could conduce to her convenience and ensure her comfort during the voyage had been spared. Every one was full of hopes, and though,

perhaps, they sounded more like doubts, there was no want of cheerfulness at dinner, especially on her part. But the brig was all this time getting away from Spithead, and the captain of the cutter which followed to take Mr. Hugh Maclean and myself back, came below and said we could not stay any longer. All our spirits, real or not, dropped at once. The others went out, and I remained some time with my sister. . . . At last they came down and took her upon deck. I there perceived that Mrs. Bailey, who had not been before observed by us, was in the adjoining cabin, and I took the opportunity of speaking to her, as the only European female who would be near my sister, and the impression which, at the time, she made on my mind was, that of a woman both kind-hearted and trustworthy. We parted again on leaving the vessel, but nothing more was said. My sister continued standing on the deck and looking towards us, as long as I could trace her figure against the sky.

" This was the last I saw of a sister, endeared to me by every tie of grateful affection; of affection never, that I know of, broken for an hour. Many will be ready to give assurance of the private worth, the frank and confiding generosity of her disposition, but to this no one can be a surer witness, or with deeper reason, than myself. In the purposes to which she devoted the fruits of her

laborious life, self was ever forgotten, and her industry, I believe, to have been unparalleled. Others are far better able than I am to speak of her as L. E. L., but my anxious testimony to the genuine goodness of her heart will not, I trust, be thought out of place; for, indeed, it springs not from any fond partiality, but is based upon the experience of my life. In childhood, and in after years, in every vicissitude of fortune, both when under severe family trials, she was gaining the rewards of literature, or when amid her success she had to pay the penalties which a woman hazards when she passes beyond the pale of private life, she was still the same—unselfish, high-minded, affectionate.

"W. H. LANDON."

There is yet one farewell to be added. Though not the last, in point of time, it is reserved until now, because it expresses all of hope that she who uttered it was capable of feeling, and all of memory which she most cared to cherish. No farewell ever came more fondly from the heart, and poetry was never more entirely the organ of truth than here. It may be said also, that gratitude and fondness could not have been more amply earned than by the generous lady whose maternal kindness gave a happy home to L. E. L. during the trying months of her later life—the lady to whom, in May 1838, she addressed the following poem:—

TO MRS. ———

My own kind friend, long years may pass
Ere thou and I shall meet,
Long years may pass ere I again
Shall sit beside thy feet.

My favourite place!—I could look up,
And meet in weal or woe
The kindest looks I ever knew—
That I shall ever know.

How many hours have pass'd away
In that accustom'd place,
Thy answer lighting, ere it came,
That kind and thoughtful face.

How many sorrows, many cares,
Have sought thee like a shrine!
Thoughts that have shunn'd all other thoughts,
Were trusted safe to thine.

How patient, and how kind thou wert!
How gentle in thy words!
Never a harsh one came to mar
The spirit's tender chords.

In hours of bitter suffering,
Thy low, sweet voice was near;
And every day it grew more kind,
And every day more dear.

The bitter feelings were assuaged,
The angry were subdued,
Ever thy gentle influence
Call'd back my better mood.

Am I too happy now?—I feel
Sometimes as if I were;
The future that before me lies,
Has many an unknown care.

I cannot choose but marvel too,
That this new love can be
More powerful within my heart,
Than what I feel for thee.

Didst thou, thyself, once feel such love
So strong within the mind,
That for its sake thou wert content
To leave all else behind?

And yet I do not love thee less—
I even love thee more;
I ask thy blessing, ere I go
Far from my native shore!

How often shall I think of thee,
In many a future scene!
How can affection ever be
To me, what thine has been.

How many words, scarce noticed now,
Will rise upon my heart,
Touch'd with a deeper tenderness,
When we are far apart!

I do not say, forget me not,
For thou wilt not forget;
Nor do I say, regret me not,
I know thou wilt regret.

And bitterly shall I regret
The friend I leave behind,
I shall not find another friend
So careful and so kind.

I met thee when my childish thoughts
Were fresh from childhood's hours,
That pleasant April time of life,
Half fancies and half flowers.

Since then how many a change and shade,
In life's web have been wrought!
Change has in every feeling been,
And change in every thought.

But there has been no change in thee,
Since to thy feet I came,
In joy or sorrow's confidence,
And still thou wert the same.

Farewell, my own beloved friend!
A few years soon pass by;
And the heart makes its own sweet home
Beneath a stranger sky.

A home of old remembrances
Where old affections dwell;
While Hope, that looks to other days,
Soothes even this farewell.

Strong is the omen at my heart,
That we again shall meet;
God bless thee, till I take, once more,
My own place at thy feet!

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON.

We have now approached a period when all speculation becomes more or less vain, and when our course must be confined as much as possible to the relation of facts and circumstances, deeply mournful in themselves, and rendered doubly so, first, by the mystery in which they have been shrouded, and next, by the surmises that have been formed in connection with them. Fiction can never have a tragedy so horrible as that which the imagination often builds on unconnected and disputable facts, or on the partial knowledge of a melancholy truth. In that truth, as far as it is clearly ascertainable, there is, without resorting to needless surmise, more than enough to shock sensibility, and to raise to the dead a lasting monument of the sweetest pity, unprofaned by those images of horror, which hasty apprehensions would conjure up around it.

A close adherence to a statement of facts, arranged with no art or effect that is not essential to a simple elucidation (if it be possible) of the truth, is the most just and delicate course that can be adopted in relation to the feelings and interests of the living. This course, and this alone, consists with what is not less sacred in our regard, justice and delicacy to the dead. She who died under the circumstances now to be narrated, reminded us, at parting, of an old promise to take such charge of her writings as events might re-

quire, and to see justice rendered to her name, adding, as well verbally as by letter, "I have in you the most affectionate confidence." It is with the keenest remembrance of this, that the attempt is here made to trace her thoughts and actions fairly, from the evil hour when, sailing from native England, she was seen by her old beloved friends no more.

The voyage presented no remarkable feature to report; the ship had fair weather, and accomplished the passage in about the usual time. The delicate and inexperienced voyager shared the usual fate attendant upon sea-travelling, but her health was re-established, and this sort of sickness she could well bear. In short, she encountered bravely all the privations and pains incidental to the passage.

We subjoin a few extracts from the journal which she kept during her voyage.

"Never is there one moment's quiet,—the deck is about a yard from your head, and it is never still; steps, falling of ropes, chains, and the rolling of parts of machinery, never stop: if you sleep, you are waked with a start, your heart beating—by some sudden roll. There is one peculiarity about sea-sickness, it is accompanied by constant craving—you first wish for one thing then for another, not that anything does you any good, but I could think of nothing but what I had nice when I was

with you; I do think I should have cried with joy, if I could have had a glass of jelly—then the thirst is burning—at first I found ginger-beer the greatest comfort, but I am grown so tired of it. After all, acids are the only things, and I have been getting better ever since Mr. Maclean landed at Madeira; we there got plenty of arrow-root and lemons, and I do think they saved my life. Mrs. Baily, my servant, has been too ill to do the least thing. . . . .

"One day will give you a picture of all—fancy Mr. Maclean up by eight!!! taking the sun. That poor Sun—he never seems to have a moment's rest! Then he and the captain breakfast, but generally he comes for a moment to see how I am. Now I get up, but dressing is a work of time, for every two minutes you have to catch hold of something to keep your feet; I then go to the sofa in the cabin, and he is there very busy keeping the ship's reckoning. Even L——— would have enough of latitude and longitude. Till to-day I have attempted to do nothing, and even this scrawl is a labour of Hercules; the table rocks to which the sofa is tied, and the sofa rocks too. . . . .

"The sky is filled with stars, and there is a new moon—just Coleridge's description:—

"The moon is going up the sky
With a single star beside."

"All seem to be racing—I can use no other word—up and down the heaven, with the movement of the vessel. It is tremendous to look up, and see the height to which the sails ascend—so dark, so shadowy; while the ship seems such a little thing, you cannot understand how she is not lifted out of the water. The only light is that in the binnacle, where the compass is placed, by which the course is steered; it is such a speck of light for the safety of the whole to depend upon. The colour of the sea is lovely ..... we had a slight tornado last night, the lightning was splendid, the thunder appeared to me much louder than I had ever heard; it was at night, and I was luckily on deck; it was very striking —the sudden stir on the deck that had been so still—the men who start up, you cannot tell from whence, and the rapid furling of the sails! . . . .

"Friday, August 10. We can now see the land. All I can say is, that Cape Coast must be infinitely worse than my worst imaginings, if it does not seem paradise after the ship. . . . The sea appears to me the most monotonous view in the world—the first impression is grand; and the waves, with the sun upon them, the loveliest purple imaginable;—the moonlight too—on one side a tremulous track of silver, the other dark, but lighted with pale gleams of some phosphoric fire; but it is always the same.— . . . . I shall indeed

be glad to land. I trust, from the very first, I shall be able to lay down a regular plan of employment. . . . . Cape Coast Castle! Thank goodness, I am on land again. Last night we arrived; the light-house became visible, and from that time, gun after gun was fired to attract attention, to say nothing of most ingenious fireworks invented on the spur of the moment. A fishing-boat put off, and in that, about two o'clock at night, Mr. Maclean left the ship, taking them all by surprise, no one supposing he would go through the surf such a foggy and dark night. I cannot tell you my anxiety, but he returned safe, though wet to the skin. We found the secretary dead, poor young man! so that everything was in utter confusion."

Whither her thoughts tended, what her heart felt, the images which filled her soul, as the ship flew on its course, all this is recorded by her own hand, in verses equally characterised by impassioned tenderness, and idealised beauty. To show how she thought and felt during those six weeks of her voyage, is to bring to view the very depths and springs of her enthusiastic nature. Of the two poems, the first is called the "Polar Star," the second, the "Night at Sea," which she transmitted to her publisher, Mr. Colburn, for insertion in his "New Monthly Magazine."

THE POLAR STAR.

This star sinks below the horizon in certain latitudes. I watched it sink lower and lower every night, till at last it disappeared.

A star has left the kindling sky—
A lovely northern light—
How many planets are on high,
But that has left the night!

I miss its bright familiar face;
It was a friend to me,
Associate with my native place
And those beyond the sea.

It rose upon our English sky,
Shone o'er our English land,
And brought back many a loving eye
And many a gentle hand.

It seem'd to answer to my thought,
It called the past to mind,
And with its welcome presence brought
All I had left behind.

The voyage, it lights no longer, ends
Soon on a foreign shore;
How can I but recall the friends
Whom I may see no more?

Fresh from the pain it was to part—
How could I bear the pain?
Yet strong the omen in my heart
That says—We meet again.

Meet with a deeper, dearer love;
For absence shows the worth
Of all from which we then remove,
Friends, home, and native earth.

Thou lovely polar star! mine eyes
Still turned the first on thee,
Till I have felt a sad surprise
That none look'd up with me.

But thou hast sunk below the wave,
Thy radiant place unknown;
I seem to stand beside a grave,
And stand by it alone.

Farewell!—ah, would to me were gi
A power upon thy light,
What words upon our English heaven
Thy loving rays should write!

Kind messages of love and hope
Upon thy rays should be;
Thy shining orbit would have scope
Scarcely enough for me.

Oh, fancy, vain as it is fond,
And little needed too;
My friends! I need not look beyond
My heart to look for you.

L. E. L.

NIGHT AT SEA.

The lovely purple of the noon's bestowing
Has vanish'd from the waters, where it flung
A royal colour, such as gems are throwing
Tyrian or regal garniture among.
'Tis night, and overhead the sky is gleaming,
Thro' the slight vapour trembles each dim star;
I turn away—my heart is sadly dreaming
Of scenes they do not light, of scenes afar.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

By each dark wave around the vessel sweeping,
Farther am I from old dear friends removed;
Till the lone vigil that I now am keeping,
I did not know how much you were beloved.
How many acts of kindness little heeded,
Kind looks, kind words, rise half reproachful now!
Hurried and anxious, my vex'd life has speeded,
And memory wears a soft accusing brow.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

The very stars are strangers, as I catch them
Athwart the shadowy sails that swell above;
I cannot hope that other eyes will watch them
At the same moment with a mutual love.
They shine not there, as here they now are shining;
The very hours are changed.—Ah, do ye sleep?
O'er each home pillow midnight is declining—
May some kind dream at least my image keep!
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

Yesterday has a charm, To-day could never
Fling o'er the mind, which knows not till it parts
How it turns back with tenderest endeavour
To fix the past within the heart of hearts.
Absence is full of memory, it teaches
The value of all old familiar things;
The strengthener of affection, while it reaches
O'er the dark parting, with an angel's wings.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me as I think of you?

The world, with one vast element omitted—
Man's own especial element, the earth;
Yet, o'er the waters is his rule transmitted
By that great knowledge whence has power its birth.

How oft on some strange loveliness while gazing
Have I wish'd for you,—beautiful as new,
The purple waves like some wild army raising
Their snowy banners as the ship cuts through.
My friends, my absent friends;
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

Bearing upon its wings the hues of morning,
Up springs the flying fish like life's false joy,
Which of the sunshine asks that frail adorning
Whose very light is fated to destroy.
Ah, so doth genius on its rainbow pinion
Spring from the depths of an unkindly world;
So spring sweet fancies from the heart's dominion,—
Too soon in death the scorched-up wing is furl'd.
My friends, my absent friends!
Whate'er I see is linked with thoughts of you.

No life is in the air, but in the waters
Are creatures, huge and terrible and strong;
The sword-fish and the shark pursue their slaughters,
War universal reigns these depths along.
Like some new island on the ocean springing,
Floats on the surface some gigantic whale,
From its vast head a silver fountain flinging,
Bright as the fountain in a fairy tale.
My friends, my absent friends!
I read such fairy legends while with you.

Light is amid the gloomy canvas spreading,
The moon is whitening the dusky sails,
From the thick bank of clouds she masters, shedding
The softest influence that o'er night prevails.
Pale is she like a young queen pale with splendour,
Haunted with passionate thoughts too fond, too deep;
The very glory that she wears is tender,
The eyes that watch her beauty fain would weep.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

Sunshine is ever cheerful, when the morning
Wakens the world with cloud-dispelling eyes;
The spirits mount to glad endeavour, scorning
What toil upon a path so sunny lies.
Sunshine and hope are comrades, and their weather
Calls into life an energy, like spring's;
But memory and moonlight go together,
Reflected in the light that either brings.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, then? I think of you.

The busy deck is hush'd, no sounds are waking
But the watch pacing silently and slow;
The waves against the sides incessant breaking,
And rope and canvas swaying to and fro.
The topmast sail, it seems like some dim pinnacle
Cresting a shadowy tower amid the air;
While red and fitful gleams come from the binnacle,
The only light on board to guide us—where?
My friends, my absent friends,
Far from my native land, and far from you.

On one side of the ship, the moonbeam's shimmer
In luminous vibration sweeps the sea,
But where the shadow falls, a strange pale glimmer
Seems, glow-worm like, amid the waves to be.
All that the spirit keeps of thought and feeling,
Takes visionary hues from such an hour;
But while some phantasy is o'er me stealing,
I start—remembrance has a keener power.
My friends, my absent friends!
From the fair dream I start to think of you.

A dusk line in the moonlight I discover,
What all day long vainly I sought to catch;
Or is it but the varying clouds that hover
Thick in the air, to mock the eyes that watch?

No; well the sailor knows each speck, appearing,
Upon the tossing waves, the far-off strand;
To that dusk line our eager ship is steering.
Her voyage done—to-morrow we shall land.
August 15. L. E. L.

These poems were sent to England for insertion in the "New Monthly," by the first vessel that sailed after her arrival at Cape Coast. It will be observed that the signature she affixed to each piece was, as usual, "L. E. L." It is natural to call her so even now, and thus, then, let her still be designated.

"To-morrow we shall land!" This was written on the 15th of August. The next day the desired landing was effected; and the best possible accommodation that could be obtained for the governor's lady (whose arrival was unexpected) was instantly provided. All necessary exertions were made at the castle to prepare it for the reception of its mistress; and everything being arranged, Mr. Maclean conducted his wife to that stately and sea-washed home.

A vessel sailed from Cape Coast soon after their arrival, and this brought to England a letter for Mr. Landon, from his sister, stating, in the strongest terms, her favourable impressions of the country, her satisfaction with her new abode, her enjoyment of health, and her cheerful hopes and prospects. Subsequent letters, addressed to several of her friends, repeat these statements without

variation. To these it is now necessary to refer, because they afford a description of the castle as a residence; some account of the people about her; a picture of her domestic trials, in the severe illness of her husband, and the want of certain accomplishments in housewifery, on which she had never bestowed a thought; with a little insight into her new habits of life, the state of her feelings, and the progress of her literary occupations. All these are glanced at in the following:—

"My dear Mr. Blanchard,

"Though so many thousand miles of land and sea are between us, I do not feel at all afraid that you have *forgotten* me; I recall you too kindly myself. You must, will, and shall be glad to hear from me. I am very well and very happy; my only regret—the emerald ring that I fling into the dark sea of life, to propitiate fate—is the constant sorrow I feel whenever I think of those whose kindness is so deeply treasured. I was wretchedly ill during the whole of the voyage. I shall never read Cooper's novels with any pleasure again. I protest against the 'Corsair.' I own that I am

'a luxurious slave,
Whose soul will sicken o'er the heaving wave.'

I am cured of all wish for a lover a pirate. I could not say—

'Aye, let the wild winds whistle o'er the deck,
So that those arms cling closer round my neck;
The only murmur of this lip should be,
No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee.'

My only prayer would be, do let me land

"The castle is a fine building, shaped like an H, of which we occupy the middle. A huge flight of steps leads to the hall, on either side of which are a suite of rooms. The one in which I am writing would be pretty in England. It is of a pale blue, and hung with some beautiful prints, for which Mr. Maclean has a passion. On three sides the batteries are washed by the sea, the fourth is a striking land view. The hills are covered with what is called bush, but we should think wood. It is like living in the 'Arabian Nights,' looking out upon palm and cocoa-nut trees. I have seen very little, for Mr. Maclean has been exceedingly ill, though now fast recovering. My talk must be of 'familiar matters to-day'—all my housekeeping troubles, for which, heaven knows, I have neither talent nor experience. However, I am beginning to get on. I know how much yam is to be given out, and how many plantains are to be eaten; and I know how much flour makes such a sized loaf. The bread here is delicious, though they use palm-wine by way of yeast. In short, if any one would steal the plate, which must be cleaned, and the mahogany tables, which must be

polished, I should be very comfortable. The solitude is absolute. I get up at seven o'clock, and, till I see Mr. Maclean at our seven o'clock-dinner, I rarely see a living creature, except the servants. You may suppose what a resource writing is. This ship brings home the first volume of a novel, and a series of papers, the 'Essays on the Female Characters in Walter Scott,' which Heath will publish from next January, a number every fortnight. I have especially begged that they may be sent to you, as it is a work about which I shall be anxious for your opinion. If my literary success does but continue, in two or three years I shall have an independence from embarrassment it is long since I have known. It will enable me comfortably to provide for my mother. * * * Mr. Maclean, besides what he did in England, leaves my literary pursuits quite in my own hands, and this will enable me to do all for my family that I could wish. I treat you, you see, with all my old confidence. I hope you will write to me; you can form no idea of the value of anything English here. Do send me any paper that you do not care about; here it will be invaluable. Tell me any chance of my tragedy, since you and Sir Edward Bulwer are its godfathers; but, most of all, tell me that you remember

"Yours, most cordially,

"L. E. MACLEAN."

Alluding, in another letter to the perpetual dash on the rocks, she says:—

"One wave comes up after another, and is for ever dashed in pieces, like human hopes, that only swell to be disappointed. We advance—up springs the shining froth of love or hope; 'a moment white, then gone for ever.'"

But this must be construed as the vein poetical; for, instead of hopes disappointed, she was experiencing a pleasant surprise that the pestilential climate was so harmless, and indulging in the prospect of successful literary exertion, and the realization of all her filial desires. This description occurs in a letter to Mrs. S. C. Hall:—

"The native huts I first took for ricks of hay, but those of the better sort are pretty white houses, with green blinds. The English gentlemen resident here have very large houses, quite mansions, with galleries running round. Generally speaking, the vegetation is so thick, that the growth of the shrubs rather resembles a wall. The solitude here is very Robinson Crusoe-ish. The hills are covered to the top with what we should call calf-weed, but here is called bush; on two of these hills are small forts, built by Mr. Maclean. The natives seem obliging and intelligent, and look very picturesque, with their fine dark figures, with pieces of the country cloth flung round them; they seem to have an excellent ear for music."

And to Lady Stepney she writes,—"I do think

the band plays from morning to night; the people seem to have a musical genius, they catch a melody at once." And of the native servants—"I find the servants civil, and wanting not in intelligence, but industry. Each has servants to wait on him, whom they call sense-boys; *i. e.* they wait on them to be taught. Scouring is done by the prisoners. Fancy three men employed to clean a room, which, in England, an old woman would do in an hour, while a soldier stands over them with a drawn bayonet."

To other acquaintances in a similar strain. To Mrs. Thomson, she enters more into personal particulars, which she knew would be expected, and which she felt it a relief to communicate to such a friend.—

"DEAREST MRS. THOMSON,

"Though hurried out of my wits—for the Maclean sails to-morrow, I must write to you. I should have had my letters preparing, from the moment I heard of her departure, but Mr. Maclean's severe illness has prevented my doing anything. For four nights I never attempted to do more than for half an hour, when he was still with opiates, to lie down on the floor in my shawl. He suffered extreme pain, but, as Mr. Dinde assured me, was in no danger: it was violent cold and stoppage. He is quite recovered now. I cannot tell you how much better the place is than we sup-

posed; if I had been allowed to bring a good English servant with me, to which there is not one single objection, I could be as comfortable as possible. The person who, at the eleventh hour, was permitted to accompany me, was never in such a capacity before; she is, therefore, no workwoman, no cook, no washer, all three most invaluable accomplishments here, but a most civil, obliging person, and superior in respectability. Her stay, however, depends on the passage home.* . . . .

I have lists of everything, and see them counted out every Monday. I see to the cleaning, and I am sure you would have laughed at my toil and trouble, when the governor of Guiana came to dinner here. I now ought to tell you how highly I hear Mr. Maclean spoken of in his public capacity, on all sides, and I cannot but see his enthusiastic devotion to his duties. We have in England little idea of the importance or the resources of this country. They send hundreds of miles along the coast, to refer causes to Mr. Maclean's decision; this will show the idea they have of his justice. When he came here it was one scene of anarchy and confusion; now the country is so quiet, a child might carry gold dust from one town to another. I was much amused at a cause tried here the other day: two of Captain

* Some expressions are omitted here which are considered to have been written confidentially.

Stanley's workmen ran away some time ago; when brought back, the reason they gave was, "Master stand by of a morning, and we could not talk." The people here are the greatest talkers in the world. I believe the continent of Africa was formed of the remains of the town of Babel. We have just had a visit from the commander of the Pylades, Captain Castle, a most kind and gentlemanlike person. * * * Do you remember our delightful day at Boxhill? you sat down and sketched—I wish I could do the same, I should so like to give you an idea of my whereabouts. Ah, my dear kind friend, I thought I loved you very dearly in England, I love you much more here. I do not the least feel the want of society. I should regret to form new friendships, my heart is quite full. I should have written to Dr. Thomson, but have only time to send my kindest, my most grateful regards; my medicine-chest has been invaluable. As to myself, I have not been so well for years; my old complaint is painful, but merely local; one small abscess forms after another in my ear, and is there any remedy for excruciating faceache?

"I must again repeat how infinitely better the place is than we thought. I have not suffered at all from heat, and there are very few insects.

"Remember me most kindly to Kate and Anthony, and believe me ever

"Your affectionate and indebted,

"L. E. MACLEAN."

Thus we find her writing on the 10th of October, to a confidential friend. It appears also, from her letter to the writer of these pages, that, notwithstanding her own sickness during the voyage, and her unremitting attention to her husband during his illness, she had written since she had quitted this country, part of the first volume of a novel commenced in England, and twelve of the essays on Scott's Female Characters, in addition to the poems composed at sea. We find her contemplating a long course of exertion for the best of objects, imposed upon her by a rigid sense of duty; as active-minded to serve, and with as much fortitude to bear, as ever; divested, moreover, of the anxiety with which she quitted England, because convinced that she now knew the worst she had to suffer from the climate, and that most of the evils she had anticipated were visionary. Her troubles and distresses, in short, appear to be traceable principally to inexperience in those "house-affairs" which she would "in haste dispatch," but which required a system of forethought and patience, together with considerable practice, to regulate efficiently.

To her brother, above all, she says—

"August 28.

"MY DEAREST WHITTINGTON,

"Now I hope and trust that this letter will find you well in every way. I cannot tell you how anxious I am to know something about you, and

how you are getting on. I was sea-sick till within the few last days, and as to describing the suffering I cannot; it is a wretchedness no one could pity who had not felt; excepting a scrawl to Mrs. ——, I never even attempted to write; my headache was perpetual, and I am still *stone deaf* on one side. The castle is a fine building, a sort of double square, so □□; the middle is ours. You enter by a flight of steps into an immense hall; the dining-room at one end, a bed-room beyond, the drawing-room at the other, and two or three more rooms; a veranda runs along the back, which commands the sea and the adjacent country. I am very well, and see every prospect of being exceedingly comfortable. Mr. Maclean has been very ill, though now recovering. I can scarcely give an opinion of the place, for we arrived under every disadvantage; just like going to a large unfurnished house in the country, which had been shut up for months. The first two or three days 'food, fire, and candles,' were not easily procured, but the mischances of the first week were only temporary, and I see every prospect of comfort; the place is far better than we ever imagined—capital rooms, plenty of servants, all of whom seem very willing, I must say. I find that I have two or three hours more than I expected, so can tell you more.

"I have scarcely ten minutes, but I mind it the less as I have sent Mrs. —— a complete journal,

which is for general information. I may be very comfortable, but there are a great many difficulties, and most of a nature that we never thought of. I find myself in great want of things that never crossed my mind; if you should see a pretty small show-desk, for I am obliged to write many notes in our sitting-room, and the one of real use cannot be put there; now be very discreet in the way of expense, and put into it slate pencils, a quire or so of small coloured note-paper, and a pasteboard pattern of the little envelopes. I wish, too, that you would speak to a bookseller, and see what sort of a bargain you could make to send a monthly packet of books —you must only inquire and let me know. I must get, at trade price, 'Thiers's History of the Revolution,' in French, and all George Sands's works, 'Valentin,' 'Indiana,' &c. &c. I think that they are to be had at the upper shop in the Burlington Arcade—send me also Lamb's works, you have them; also three yards of white waist-ribbon for belts, and the Forget-Me-Not. I write the order for it below—put it under cover to Ackermann, Strand. I forget at where Miss —— had her lodgings—Park-street; two volumes of memoirs, translated from the French—if still there, they would be invaluable. Good God! how anxious I am to know how this letter may find you. Five pounds is due from the Forget-Me-Not. Do not get the desk and books unless cheap. God bless you; this is

most abrupt and hurried, but you will have letters enough next time, and Mrs. ——'s letters tell all.

" Your affectionate,

" L. E. MACLEAN.

" Do not send the desk unless cheap—tell me all about yourself—from me you shall have a complete journal—ask to see Mrs. ——'s; how I hope you are doing well—it makes me so low to think of you."

" September 27.

" MY DEAREST WHITTINGTON,

" I am now getting every day more and more anxious to hear something about you—though I know very well it is too soon even to think of expecting it—I wonder so often what you are doing, how you are getting on, and if any good luck has happened to you. . . . . I can scarcely make even you understand how perfectly ludicrous the idea of jealousy of a native woman really is. Sentiment, affection, are never thought of—it is a temporary bargain—I must add that it seems to me quite monstrous * * * *

" Now he gave me not one real idea of what I was coming to—half the time bestowed in fancying unreal horrors, would have made me mistress of all I needed to know. I do not know what Scotch girls may do, but I am quite sure any English girl would be puzzled. * * You would be surprised at the pains I have taken; I give out everything—

I have made lists of everything, and I stand over the cleaning of everything—but I will give you the history of one day:—I rise at seven, breakfast at eight—give my orders—give out everything—flour, sugar, &c., from the store—see to which room I will have cleaned, and then sit down to write—lunch at one on roasted yam, then write—much interrupted by having to see to different things—till six—dress—walk in the veranda till dinner at seven. * * * * Mrs. Bailey, the person you saw at Portsmouth, is a most obliging, respectable person, but nothing as a servant; no worker, and little of a cook, but I know not what I should have done without her and her husband; he is invaluable, and I wish to heaven he had been going to stay, or that I had brought Martha—a good English servant would be a blessing. So much for the worst side; but there is also a better one to the picture—I may get on better than I expect. Let me know if you are in London, and can make a bargain for books, but not at more than half-price. My darling Whittington, while the messenger waits for Mr. Maclean, I will take the chance of a few more lines—how I hope you are all right—I had no idea I should have been so anxious. I was so worried before I left England, that I did not say half I now think—I feel selfish in leaving you, and fancy a thousand things in which, had I been near, I might have helped you. Remember me

kindly to Mr. Blanchard. God bless you, my dearest brother, your affectionate

" L. E. MACLEAN."

Finally, she thus writes to her mother in the month of September.

" MY DEAR MOTHER—Though this is but a hurried opportunity of writing, I will not let the African sail without a few lines. I suffered most dreadfully, during the voyage, from sea-sickness—during the whole six weeks I scarcely held up my head; but, since I landed, I have been perfectly well,—indeed, in some respects better than I have been for many months. You cannot imagine how different everything here is to England. I hope, however, in time, to get on pretty well. There is, nevertheless, a great deal to do. I have never been accustomed to house-keeping, and here everything must be seen to yourself; it matters not what it is, it must be kept under lock and key. I get up at seven, breakfast at eight, and give out flour, butter, sugar, ale, from the store. I have found the bag you gave me so useful to hold the keys, of which I have a little army. We live almost entirely upon chicken and duck, for if a sheep be killed, it must be all eaten that day. The bread is very good; they use palm-wine for yeast. Yams are a capital substitute for potatoes; pies and

puddings are never thought of, unless there is a party. The washing has been a terrible trouble, but I am getting on better. I have found a woman to wash some of the things, but the men do all the starching and ironing. Never did people require so much looking after. . . . . At seven Mr. Maclean comes in from court—till then I never see a living creature, but the servants. . . . . Mr. Maclean has been very ill—he caught cold from getting wet through when he landed in the dead of the night. I hope to hear good accounts from England; it makes me often very anxious to think what a distance I am, and what may have happened. I have just had a beautiful little gazelle given me, no bigger than a kitten, but it will be very difficult to keep alive. The weather is now very warm—the nights are so hot that you can only bear the lightest sheet over you. As to the beds, the mattresses are so hard, they are like iron—the damp is very destructive—the dew is like rain, and there are no fire-places; you would not believe it, but a grate would be the first of luxuries. Keys, scissors, everything rusts. I have been in the greatest trouble with Mr. Maclean's sudden and violent illness; for four nights I never laid down but on the floor by his bedside; he suffered very much, though there was no danger; he has never been quite well since he arrived. I think I was never so fatigued in my life as by the Dutch

governor's visit—himself, his two aides-de-camp, and the dinner, really drove me to despair. The utter want of the commonest necessaries—no such thing as saucepan, jug, or pail; there was certainly plate, glass, and china, but a dinner requires something more. . . . Remember me to my cousin; I am glad you have seen Mrs. Thomson. Write to your affectionate

"L. E. MACLEAN."

Such was her own account to relations, friends, and acquaintances, of her health, her feelings, her situation, her prospects, up to the evening of Sunday, the 14th October—the night before the expected sailing of the vessel which was to bring these gratifying and welcome tidings to her native country. From herself there is no further intelligence. The Maclean arrived at the close of the year, bringing, with these seeming evidences of life and hope, intelligence of the dreadful reality—Death, sudden death. The public papers of the 1st of January, 1839, contained the following announcement:

"Died, on Monday, the 15th of October last, at Cape Coast Castle, Africa, suddenly, Letitia Elizabeth, wife of George Maclean, Esq., Governor of Cape Coast."

The intelligence created but one sentiment of grief and pity in all to whom it came; but to the

few who received, at the same moment, an apparent testimonial, under her own hand, of health and spirits, cheerful views and honourable endeavours, the shock was profound, the anguish bitter. There was a pang beyond even that; and it followed quick, upon the announcement that, according to the verdict of a coroner's jury, summoned to inquire into the cause of death, the lamented lady had died by poison, incautiously administered by her own hand, as a remedy for a spasmodic attack with which she had been seized on the morning of the fifteenth.

The depositions taken at this inquest were immediately obtained, by the brother of the deceased, from the secretary to the Western African Company. They are as follow :—

" At an inquisition held at Cape Coast Castle, the fifteenth day of October, eighteen hundred and thirty-eight, before me, James Swanzey, Esq., one of her Majesty's justices of the peace, and others, the jurors of our Lady Queen Victoria, upon view of the body of Letitia Elizabeth Maclean,—*Emily Bailey*, being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, and examined, deposeth and saith: That between the hours of eight and nine of the morning of the 15th instant, the deponent having received a note addressed to Mrs. Maclean, from Mr. Swanzey, went to her room for the purpose of delivering the same to her, found some difficulty in opening the door, in consequence of Mrs. Maclean having fallen against it; that deponent, on entering the room, discovered Mrs. Maclean lying on the floor, with *an empty bottle in her hand* (which bottle being produced was labelled ' Acid Hydrocianicum Delatum, Pharm. Lond. 1836. Medium Dose Five Minims, being about one-third the

strength of that in former use, prepared by Scheele's proof'), and quite senseless; that on seeing this, deponent went for her husband to call Mr. Maclean; she believed that Mrs. Maclean must have been attempting to open the door to call for assistance, when she fell; that her mistress was subject to be attacked by spasms, and was in the habit of taking, occasionally, a drop or two of the medicine in the bottle in water; but had not herself seen her do so more than two or three times; she (Mrs. Maclean) had the spasms rather badly the previous evening, and wished to take a little of the medicine contained in the bottle to give her relief; she did not complain much this morning. Deponent was not present when her mistress was taken ill; but had seen her about half-an-hour before, when she appeared well, and made her a present, as the deponent was about leaving the Coast for England; that Mrs. Maclean then told deponent to retire, and she would send for her when she wished to dress. Deponent had not seen her writing this morning; but she was so employed the previous evening, when she delivered to deponent two letters for friends in England, and was affected at the thought of deponent leaving her; that when deponent saw her last, she was in her usual spirits; the bottle found in Mrs. Maclean's hand was uncorked, and she (deponent) afterwards corked it, and put it aside; she could state nothing more which could throw any light on the subject.

The *husband* of the above witness then deposes to his being called by his wife, that he placed the head of the deceased on a pillow, and went for medical attendance, at Mr. Maclean's request.

"*George Maclean* then deposeth and saith—That deponent saw nothing particular about Mrs. Maclean this morning, except that she complained of weariness, and after having, as usual, given him some tea and arrow-root, at six o'clock, went to bed again for about one hour and a half. Deponent attributed her weariness to attendance upon himself while sick, and want of rest for three previous nights; that she was very subject to spasms and hysterical affections, and had been in the custom of using themedicine contained in the small bottle pro-

duced, as a remedy or prevention, which she had told him had been prescribed for her by her medical attendant in London (Dr. Thomson); that on seeing her use it deponent had threatened to throw it away, and had at one time told her that he had actually done so, when she appeared so much alarmed, and said it was so necessary for the preservation of her life, that deponent was prevented from afterwards taking it away; that he had been called by Bailey that morning, when he found Mrs. Maclean on the floor near the door, quite senseless; that he immediately sent for the doctor, and assisted to carry her to the bed; that the efforts of the doctor to restore life were in vain, and that deponent cannot assign any cause for her death; that the letter in the following words now produced to this deponent are stated to have been found in Mrs. Maclean's desk this morning, is in her own hand-writing, and *that an unkind word had never passed between Mrs. Maclean and deponent.*

(LETTER.)

"My dearest Maria,

"I cannot but write you a brief account, how I enact the part of a feminine Robinson Crusoe. I must say, in itself, the place is infinitely superior to all I ever even dreamed of. The castle is a fine building—the rooms excellent. I do not suffer from heat; insects there are few, or none; and I am in excellent health. The solitude, except an occasional dinner, is absolute; from seven in the morning till seven, when we dine, I never see Mr. Maclean, and rarely any one else. We were welcomed by a series of dinners, which I am glad are over—for it is very awkward to be the only lady—still the great kindness with which I have been treated, and the very pleasant manners of many of the gentlemen, made me feel it as little as possible. Last week we had a visit from Captain Castle, of the *Pylades.* His story is very melancholy. He married, six months before he left England, to one of the beautiful Miss Hills, Sir John Hill's daughter, and she died just as he received orders to return home. We also had a visit from Colonel Bosch, the Dutch governor, a most gentlemanly-like man. But fancy how awk-

ward the next morning,—I cannot induce Mr. Maclean to rise, and I have to make breakfast, and do the honours of adieu to him and his officers—white plumes, mustachios, and all. I think I never felt more embarrassed. I have not yet felt the want of society in the least. I do not wish to form new friends, and never does a day pass without thinking most affectionately of my old ones. On three sides we are surrounded by the sea. I like the perpetual dash on the rocks—one wave comes up after another, and is for ever dashed in pieces, like human hopes that only swell to be disappointed. We advance—up springs the shining froth of love or hope, 'a moment white, and gone for ever.' The land view, with its cocoa and palm trees, is very striking—it is like a scene in the 'Arabian Nights.' Of a night the beauty is very remarkable; the sea is of a silvery purple, and the moon deserves all that has been said in her favour. I have only once been out of the fort by daylight, and then was delighted. The salt lakes were first died a deep crimson by the setting sun, and as we returned they seemed a faint violet in the twilight, just broken by a thousand stars, while before us was the red beacon light. The chance of sending this letter is a very sudden one, or I should have ventured to write to General Fagan, to whom I beg the very kindest regards. Dearest, do not forget me. Pray write to me, "Mrs. George Maclean, Cape Coast Castle, care of Messrs, Forster and Smith, 5, New City Chambers, Bishopsgate-street." Write about yourself—nothing else half so much interests your affectionate

"L. E. MACLEAN."

Cape Coast Castle, Oct. 15.

"*William Cobbold*, surgeon, is the next witness; he states that he 'was called upon to attend Mrs. Maclean, and that, on his arrival he found her perfectly insensible, with the pupils of both eyes much dilated, and fancied he could detect a slight pulsation at the heart, but very feeble, and which ceased a very short time after his arrival; knew that violent action was going on, and immediately administered a dose of ammonia, which happened to be in the room, and directed frictions of the same kind

to be applied.' The deponent then goes on to describe that he was preparing other remedies, 'before which could be effected life was extinct. Was strengthened in his opion that death was caused by the improper use of the medicine, *the bottle of which was found in her hand*, from learning that Mrs. Maclean was in the habit of taking it occasionally for spasmodic affection, to which she was subject. *The body after death was perfectly natural;* imagined that Mrs. Maclean, not having experienced the usual benefit from the prescribed quantity may have been induced to exceed it, or that the spasms may have come on when she was in the act of taking the medicine, and thus involuntarily a greater quantity may have been swallowed; had no hesitation in ascribing her death to this cause; ten drops would be sufficient to cause death in ten or fifteen minutes, to a person not in the habit of using it; was so fully convinced that the medicine was the cause of her death, that *he did not think it necessary to open the body.*'

"A deposition from Mr. Brodie Cruikshank closes the evidence. He swears to having seen Mrs. Maclean the night before 'in her usual spirits,' and to having promised to take some letters to England for her.

"The inquest is then given. It recites that it was taken 'before me, James Swanzey, Member of the Council of the Government, and one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the British Settlements on the Gold Coast of Africa, acting as Coroner, upon the view of the body of Letitia Elizabeth Maclean, then and there lying dead,—upon the oaths of William Topp, John Jackson, Robert Jackson, William Edward Stanley, Joseph Clouston, James Henry Akhurst, Henry Smith, William Spinks, and Thomas Hutton, good and lawful men of Cape Coast Castle aforesaid; as well as upon the oaths of James Morley, master of the brig *Governor Maclean*, Francis Swanzey, of Dixcove, John Gardiner Jackson, master of the brig *Osborne*, and Brodie Cruikshank, of Annamaboe, who being sworn and charged to inquire on the part of our said Lady the Queen, when, where, how, and after what manner the said Letitia Elizabeth came to her death, do, upon their oaths,

say that on the day and year aforesaid, and at the place aforesaid, the death of the said Letitia was caused by her having incautiously taken an over-dose of prussic acid, which, from evidence, it appeared she had been in the habit of using as a remedy for spasmodic affections to which she was subject.'"

The publication of these depositions and the verdict founded on them, created a deep and general interest, and was instantly followed by a variety of rumours and surmises of the most painful description. The circumstance that written evidence only was received, the surgeon's omission to open the body, the irregularity of the entire proceedings, compared with the mode in which inquests are conducted here, and the marked insufficiency of the inquiry, were freely commented on in the public journals. The verdict itself was received with great suspicion, and soon failed in most quarters to obtain concurrence.

The inference then was, and the dreadful idea became but too prevalent, that the deadly acid had been taken by the deceased, but not accidentally; that, racked by many nameless griefs, beset with distracting fears of peril and accumulating trouble, the object of our admiration and sympathy, overwrought, over-excited by the very effort to suppress her sorrows, and to write gay accounts of her health and spirits to her friends in England, had swallowed the fatal draught by design. It was

said so publicly, and thence believed—perhaps generally.

To this succeeded a report, of even a more revolting nature, a suspicion so dark, that without the strongest colour of reason, it would be criminal as well as torturing to entertain it. It was connected with a circumstance already adverted to as having been communicated to L. E. L. before her marriage; the existence at Cape Coast, though at many miles distance from the Castle, of one who, with her child, had formerly been its inhabitant; and hence to those whose minds reverted to the hot blood and the fierce habits of the natives of Western Africa, the dreadful suggestion was presented, that the English intruder at the governor's residence, the European lady of the colony, had been sacrificed to a horrible spirit of female vengeance. This was the darkest picture the mind could dwell upon, and it was therefore, at least as attractive, and as generally favoured, as the other gloomy hypothesis.

A request was then publicly made on the part of the head of Mr. Maclean's family in England, and the nearest relative of the deceased, that all who respected and lamented her, would abstain from adding to the many idle and distressing speculations relative to her fate. They represented, that, far from the morbid or melancholy temperament which had been, most erroneously, ascribed

to her, all who were more familiarly acquainted with her, could bear witness to the cheerfulness and gaiety of her natural disposition, which even care and trouble could only temporarily obscure. The feeling with which she regarded her new duties and prospects on quitting England, was borne testimony to, and her general correspondence was dwelt upon as ample and touching evidence of the affectionate remembrance with which her friends were regarded. With respect to the more intimate relation of life, the duties of which she fulfilled with exemplary devotion—having attended her husband in his illness for nights and days together, up to the hour of her decease—the "Courier" had the joint authority of the head of her husband's family in England, and of her own nearest relative, to state, that Mr. Maclean, in his letter accompanying the intelligence of his loss, declared that his affection for her, his confidence in the qualities that ennobled her nature and endeared her to all, remained unimpaired to the latest moment; every expression he used tending to show much she deserved to be happy, and how irreparable was his bereavement.

This appeal checked the propensity to publish, though the mystery remained to be everywhere discussed, and found fruitful of surmises in private. Measures were next adopted for clearing up, if possible, all that was obscure in the depo-

one folio pages. It appears, from information which I received in November last, that a previous communication, of considerable length, had been addressed to me from Cape Coast, by Mr. Maclean, so early as February, 1839. This, however, never reached my hands, but I have received an explanation from Mr. Maclean's agent, that the non-delivery of it was attributable to a mistake.

"The document which I did receive was said to be 'written exclusively for my information, and to be considered private, at least for the present.' I made an offer to Mr. Maclean's family to append it to this memoir, but the offer was not accepted. It cannot therefore speak for itself. In reply to the letter by which it was accompanied, I declined pronouncing any opinion upon the statements, but I observed, 'I do not hesitate to say, that I think George Maclean's own narrative is marked by the desire, and goes to remove any impression of suicide from my sister's memory, and is just so far acceptable as it is calculated to attain the end which alone I had at heart in soliciting investigation by Government.'

"More than a year had elapsed from the date of my sister's death, when Mrs. Bailey and her husband returned to England. I questioned her myself, and could elicit little more than was already known; except the statement that my sister had given her two letters the evening before her death;

and that she had also given her a lock of her hair for me, enjoining her to deliver it, together with the letter, before she had been twenty-four hours in England. Mrs. Bailey gave me the hair, but the two letters her husband had taken to Mr. Maclean. I did not trust to any examination of my own; a friend accompanied me and re-questioned Mrs. Bailey; and all who know him would be fully satisfied that nothing was left unsifted.

"I then addressed to the Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, the following letter:—

"December, 1839.

"'My Lord,

"'Early in the present year it became my duty, as brother of the late Mrs. Maclean, of Cape Coast Castle, to solicit investigation into her fate. As the proper authority to which I could appeal, I sought and had an interview with Sir George Grey, at the Colonial Office. The public press teemed with accounts that my sister had either committed suicide, or fallen a victim to poison. This latter supposition was corroborated by my own inquiries among those long familiar with Cape Coast—by the medical comment of Dr. Thomson, my sister's physician, while in England—by the unsatisfactory nature of the inquest—and by the apparent detention of the principal witness. On these and on other grounds, which I submitted in writing, together

with Dr. Thomson's medical comment on the inquest, investigation was promised. Subsequently Mr. Labouchere assured me that Lord Normanby had kindly signified that every requisite and expedient inquiry should be instituted. I have received no communication from the Colonial Office, and I now entreat your Lordship to authorize my being informed of the result to which the promised investigation has led; and, if at hand, that my papers be returned.

"'It were unbecoming to burden your lordship with any details, how, on the one hand, I have been charged as unjust towards Mr. Maclean; and, on the other, as slack in the vindication of my sister's memory. I have done only what I felt to be my duty; but it is necessary for me to state, that Mrs. Bailey, the principal witness, has recently returned, and adds little to her deposition, except admitting the fact, that two letters were entrusted to her by my sister the evening before her death; that one of those letters was for me, and so addressed; and that they were given to Mr. Maclean. Those letters have not been received. It is a mournful satisfaction for me now to say, that the statement which at first I submitted (whatever the issue), was substantially correct in every particular.

"'Anxious as my family and friends are to close a source of so much aggravated sorrow, and de-

spairing now of any positive proof of her true fate, your lordship's kindness will, I am sure, comply with my request, and enable me, as far as possible, to lay at rest the memory of my poor sister.

" ' I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) " ' W. H. LANDON.'

" To the above letter I received the subjoined reply :—

" ' Downing-street, 26th Dec., 1839.

" ' Sir,

" ' I am directed by Lord John Russell to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, requesting to be informed of the result of the inquiries which you were led to expect his predecessor in office would institute into the causes which led to the melancholy demise of your sister at Cape Coast Castle, and I am to acquaint you in reply, that Lord Normanby had found so many difficulties in the way of a proper investigation, that might with any hope lead to a satisfactory conclusion, that he was forced to abandon his original intention ; and Lord John Russell is now, with great regret, for the same reasons, compelled to decide to the same effect. The papers to which you allude, having, from their confidential nature, been diverted from passing through the ordinary official channels, are at present mislaid, but will be returned to you as soon as they may be found.

" ' I am, Sir, &c.

" ' R. VERNON SMITH.'

"I have only to add, to this the expression of my belief, that could any further information have been elicited it would not have been wanting.

W. H. L."

It is now our duty to offer the explanations with which we have been favoured, with regard to those two points whereon the conduct of Emily Bailey appears calculated to create suspicion; viz. her absence from England for a whole twelvemonth after her return seemed decided upon, and the non-delivery of the two letters which had been entrusted to her care by her mistress; both facts—of her intended return and of the letters being given into her hands—being stated in her own deposition at the inquest. Having spoken with her ourselves, we subjoin her explanation upon these subjects, as reduced to writing at the time.

"With respect to the two letters, one for Mr. Landon and the other for Mrs. ———, they were merely letters of introduction for myself, which Mrs. Maclean had mentioned she would give me about a fortnight before her death. When she gave them to me, she said the one to her brother was to let him know who I was. She at the same time gave me a lock of hair for him. The one for Mrs. ——— she said was also a letter of introduc-

tion, and it would give me an opportunity of informing Mrs. ——— what things would be useful and necessary for the country, that she might know what to send her out. As I did not then leave, for the reasons hereafter mentioned, I gave them to my husband, who informed me he gave them to Mr. Maclean. If they were not sent home I cannot account for it, unless it was because I was not coming myself. Indeed, I said to my husband when I gave them to him, that as I was not going it was useless to send them.

"When I left London with Mrs. Maclean it was not agreed that I should stay in Africa, and about three weeks or a month before her death it was settled that I should return home, and I was about to leave the morning after her death. This unexpected and sorrowful event delayed the sailing of the vessel some days. My husband having been engaged in England, as steward on board the vessel, through Mr. Maclean's recommendation, without Captain Morley, who was the master of the vessel, being consulted, he took a dislike to him, from that and other things, and they had words on the passage out. When my husband and I were about to embark, Captain Morley said my husband should go before the mast, and not as steward, as on the outward passage (Mr. Maclean no longer having any power he said on board the vessel), and that I should go in the steerage. This my husband ob-

jected to, and I believe Mr. Maclean also disapproved of it when consulted by my husband, as there were no accommodations in the steerage for a female. We were obliged, therefore, to wait for another opportunity; and, subsequently, my husband received an appointment as overlooker of the labourers, which delayed our return for nearly a twelvemonth. These are the only reasons why I did not return as was originally intended."

In further explanation of the protracted stay of the Baileys, a circumstance which certainly occasioned much anxiety and suspicion in this country, we are enabled to append the statement of Mr. Maclean himself. It forms part of a letter, addressed by that gentleman to Mr. Landon, and dated the 28th February, 1839. Mr. Landon never knew of its existence until apprised of its contents by the writer of these pages—to whose hands a copy of it was committed, so lately as November, 1840.

"It seems, also, that I *detained* the two servants here to prevent their giving evidence against me in England! This must necessarily have been but a surmise—a surmise, too, with as little foundation for it as any of the others. Both Mr. Cruikshank, and the commander of the 'Governor Maclean,' could have proved how very anxious I was for the return of these servants to England *after* my dear wife's death. Mr. Cruikshank, I

think, saw me pay their wages, and make every arrangement for their going; and I was most reluctantly prevailed upon to keep them on the earnest representation of the man-servant (steward), that both he and his wife would be made miserable if forced to go on board the vessel—both having given offence to the commander. I had even talked of their going home before poor Letitia's death, though I had not then really intended it on her account, as she disliked the idea of being without an English female attendant; but the husband being a servant of the vessel, not of mine, I had no right to keep him, and warned him to prepare to go accordingly. Aware, however, that the commander was as anxious to leave them as they were to remain, I knew I should thus secure the woman's services for her mistress, without the appearance of improperly using my authority to deprive a vessel of one of her crew, and without coming under an obligation to either party. But *after* my poor wife's death, I was unaffectedly anxious for their going, having no possible motive for detaining both of them, though, on account of my illness, I could certainly ill spare the services of the husband. . . . Had I even been wicked enough to wish to stifle their evidence, *I had it not in my power*, not having seen or spoken to either of them *alone*, before they were placed upon their oaths, and subjected to a close and strict examination."

The letter from which we have, in justice to Mr. Maclean, extracted the foregoing statement, contains some passages that appear to be necessary to a better understanding, first of the circumstances under which L. E. L. wrote her complaints of the "wants, hardships, and house-keeping-troubles" to which she was exposed; and next of the conduct which she experienced from her husband, amidst the many distressing influences of illness and occupation that beset him from the moment of his arrival.

Certain allusions in Mr. Maclean's letter to the vague and unsupported rumour, that his wife owed her death to the jealousy of a native female, we pass by, the subject being one on which it is now useless and painful to enter. Mr. Maclean, we presume, was never suspected of having anything either to conceal or to disclose in relation to such a rumour. It is the reference to his own "conduct," and to her "complaints," with which, as a matter of vital interest, we have here to do; and it is exactly the same feeling, the same sense of justice and honour, animating from the beginning the endeavour to do justice to the character of the dead, that has prompted an application to Mr. Maclean's friends in England, for permission to print the passages referred to, in his vindication and in hers—in explanation of much that might

otherwise have remained conflicting and mysterious.*

First, in reference to rumours which had reached him that various expressions in his wife's letters afforded the presumption that he had "treated her with cruelty," that "her life had become insupportable," and that she had "resolved to end it."†

"It is impossible that such could have been the tenor of her letters . . . It is most true, God knows—and I am not aware that I ever wished or attempted to conceal it—that after our arrival on the coast, it was out of my power to be the same attentive husband that I had endeavoured to be previously. Not only was my health entirely broken, but I frequently suffered acute bodily pain —and if a temporary remission of pain took place, I was harassed almost beyond endurance by an accumulation of business arising from various causes. Thus worn out in body and mind, at a time when I knew the public service demanded my best energies—how *could* I be the attentive hus-

* It should be remarked that Mr. Maclean's letter was not intended for publication. It was written amidst "distracting thoughts," and with an indignant sense of the injuries inflicted upon him by the rumours then in a course of circulation. But all his friends will feel that there is no indelicacy in making public the passages above quoted.

† We know of no such expressions, or of anything at all resembling them, in any of her letters.

band I was at other times? But was *she* one seriously to care for the want of attentions, the absence of those accommodations, or of those trifling articles of luxury, or even of convenience, to which she had been accustomed? Was *she* one seriously to care for such temporary privations, or even for peevishness of temper, when evidently induced by acute bodily suffering! .... I shall never forget the words she used. I had told her that, at one period of my illness, I had felt sure of dying, and that, then, my only thoughts had been about what would become of her. She looked up into my face, and said, 'And do you really think that I could survive you? Never believe it, nor take any thought about my fate, for I'm sure I should not live a day after you.' And yet this is she who *had* written but a few days before, that her existence was insupportable on account of my 'cruelty and indifference!'"

Secondly, in relation to letters, complaining of hardships and of her husband, in terms which he himself knew of, saw, and sanctioned.

"I believe I saw all her letters to Mrs. —— and others. At least, when I was able to read or listen, she used to bring them to me for the purpose; and I recollect her saying to me (laughingly) 'I promised to tell Mrs. —— all my grievances, and depend upon it I'll keep my word.' I answered in the same tone, 'Do so, by all means, for then I

shall be sure to hear of them.' . . . . The letters which *I* recollect having seen, contained such expressions as these 'His habits are the most out-of-the-way you can imagine.' 'He is the most unliveable-with person I ever saw.' 'I am terribly at a loss in household matters, and he is so particular.' 'We have splendid plate, and beautiful crystal, but not a thing to clean either with.' 'He is always worrying me to attend to household matters, and not to mind writing nonsense-verses, as he calls them;' with fifty more expressions of the same kind. In fact, *I myself made up and sealed the very letters* containing these complaints and details of hardships. But little did I, or the writer, dream that they were destined to be understood literally—and even in an infinitely worse sense than the words themselves warrant—little did either dream that they were to be made a handle for taxing me with the blackest ingratitude, and cruelty, and indifference, towards her, for whom, God knows, I would gladly have sacrified my life. . . .

"I must have seen it, had she been so unhappy. She could not, would not, have so concealed it. I have racked my memory, in order to recollect whether I could have spoken peevishly or unkindly to her during the few days immediately preceding her death—I had just then been relieved from the dreadful pain I had suffered—but I cannot remember having done so, even by accident. . . .

"You will understand that I have here spoken of poor Letitia's situation in its very worst light, at a period when I was ill and suffering cruelly, without alluding to the many hours of happiness, pure unalloyed happiness, and of still happier anticipations of the future, which we have passed together; nor have I said a word of her almost invariable cheerfulness, and (apparent) happiness and contentment, which would alone give the lie to the vile insinuations, so industriously circulated and so eagerly believed."

Mr. Maclean also adverts to the fact, of his having transmitted the letters alluded to, subsequently to his wife's death, which, except upon the principle, *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*, he would scarcely have ventured to do, had he felt that there was anything to suppress. "I knew," he says, "the contents of the whole, having made them up, and sealed, and, I think, addressed, a portion of them. I had them in my exclusive possession—in my own sole power; and surely had I been indeed the monster I have been represented, I should, at least, have had the common discretion to destroy or suppress such formidable proofs of my villany." . . .

He then states that on the evening of Sunday, the 14th of October, his wife, seeing him scarcely able to attempt even one or two indispensable letters, had kindly offered to write a few

lines to his father. "This letter," he says, "was written and given to me to be sealed, late upon the Sunday, about twelve hours before her death;" and he concludes it to be the last she ever wrote, with the exception of that which was found open in her desk. (It was on this evening, however, that she wrote the two missing letters entrusted to Mrs. Bailey.) There is certainly, in this letter to the Rev. Mr. Maclean, no indication of ill-health, ill-spirits, or pining discontent. It is merely an echo of many of the preceding. It describes the illness over which she had watched, and the "intolerable torture" of her husband. "I am most thankful to say that he is recovered now, and I hope he will take a lesson from it of prudence for the future. He desires me to express his regret that his brother did not deliver his letter to Mr. Mathew Forster. I am, however, afraid to repeat his scolding, for it is just what he himself would have done." . . . . "I am quite surprised to find Cape Coast so much better than I had supposed." The account already given of the habits of the natives, of their idleness and love of music, follows this, and the letter terminates with expressions of respect and affection.

In a letter written subsequently to a friend, Mr. Maclean says—"Her letters contain nothing beyond an exaggerated account of the 'awful difficulties' my poor wife experienced 'in her attempt,

at housekeeping;' and she mentions 'my *particularity* about having things right,' and a great deal more to the same purpose; merely to show what an excellent wife and house-manager she had become, and how much she had had to go through on account of my illness. *I* understood the spirit in which they were written."

To this friend, Mr. Maclean says, that he has stated his case *at its worst*, on the principle that a man is a fool if he do not tell his solicitor or physician the real state of affairs, "the whole truth."*

* Lest any testimony, in addition to the declarations of Mr. Maclean, should be deemed desirable—lest in a narrative designed to exhibit to the world a faithful picture of the conduct and character of the wife, we should be supposed to be indifferent about the question of justice or injustice to the husband, we close this statement, by citing in Mr. Maclean's behalf, the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Freeman, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. This gentleman, whose letter relative to the death he lamented, and the verdict of the jury, was supposed to have supplied the first grounds of prejudice against Mr. Maclean, in this country, when appealed to by that gentleman to state "Whether you have ever observed anything in my conversation, manners, or conduct, which could induce you to think me capable of behaving cruelly or unkindly to any one," ..... hastened to explain the object of the letter referred to, and to declare, "I have never seen anything in your conversation, manners, or conduct, either in public or private, which would induce me to consider you capable of harsh or unkind treatment to any one, under any circumstances whatever, nor have I ever seen anything which would lead me to suppose or suspect you of being careless of the feelings of others, or capable of any ungentlemanlike conduct." "I saw nothing whatever in your beha-

In both letters he professes his desire for the institution of a most rigid inquiry, and his readiness to bear the whole expense of it; adding to this, the expression of his deep anxiety to return to England, to meet every charge, and to enforce investigation. But finding this to be impracticable, he has subsequently authorised an offer to be made in his name—to pay the entire expenses, including, of course, the passage out and home, of any one whom the friends of his late wife might appoint to visit Cape Coast, and make inquiries on the spot into all matters connected with her residence and death on the coast of Africa.

One other example of that honourable liberality in all pecuniary matters, which had characterized Mr. Maclean's conduct from the beginning, it would be here an injustice to omit. Soon after the death of his wife, he addressed a letter to Mrs. Landon, intimating his desire to continue to her the income which it was the affectionate hope of her daughter to settle permanently upon her. The offer was declined by the family; but the generous feeling which regarded the proposal but as a duty,

---

viour which could create in my mind the slightest suspicion of your being unkind to Mrs. Maclean during her life. I have seen you as a gentleman at the head of your table, and I have witnessed your conduct, both as a husband and as a widower; it is upon this intimate knowledge of your deportment that I have made the preceding statements."

and the fulfilment of an implied engagement, is here mentioned with respect.

We now close our extracts from Mr. Maclean's narrative: unconscious of the omission of a single passage calculated to throw light on the events to which it refers, to explain his own conduct, or to vindicate the dead.

Mr. Maclean caused, as we are informed, "the highest honours to be paid to her remains." The arrangements for interment were necessarily made in haste, but the ceremony, we may suppose, was not less solemn from the awful and sudden fate that had overtaken one, who was the object of respect as well as admiration wherever she was known. The inquest having taken place within a few hours after death, the remains of L. E. L. were, on the following day, consigned to a grave dug near the Castle, and within the wall enclosing it. It was the immediate wish of Mr. Maclean to place above this grave a suitable memorial, and his desire was expressed in the earliest letter which he sent to England; but we believe that some delay took place in the execution of the order he issued, from the necessity of referring back to the Coast for information as to the intended site of the monument, in order that it might be prepared accordingly. "A handsome marble tablet" is now, it appears, on its

way to Cape Coast, to be erected in the castle, bearing the following inscription:—

" Hic jacet sepultum
Omne quod mortale fuit
Letitiæ Elizabethæ Maclean.
Quam egregiâ ornatam indole
Musis unicè amatam,
Omniumque amores secum trahentem,
In ipso ætatis flore
Mors immatura rapuit,
Die Octobris XV. A.D., M.D.CCC.XXXVIII.
Ætat. XXXVI.
Quod spectas, viator, marmor,
Vanum heu doloris monumentum
Conjux mœrens erexit.

" Here lies interred
All that was mortal
Of Lætitia Elizabeth Maclean.
Adorned with a pure mind,
Singularly favoured of the Muses,
And dearly beloved by all,
She was prematurely snatched away
by death in the flower of her age,
On the 13th of October 1838,
Aged 36 years.
The marble which you behold, O traveller,
a sorrowing husband has erected,
vain emblem of his grief."

A writer, equally characterised by acute intellect and a zeal for truth, justly urged, at the time, that the duty of investigation was rendered the more imperative by the scene of the transaction. " A small colonial settlement," he observed, " in a

barbarous region, like that of Cape Coast Castle, is, of all places in the world, that which most needs jealous supervision. Savage life and despotic power are rude elements, whether in agreement or in collision. Such localities are the fitting haunts of oppressions, sufferings, and crimes, that could not exist in the sunshine of civilization. When, on what proved to be the last evening of her life, the departure of her only European attendant was announced to L. E. L., how completely were her own lines verified,

> "I seem to stand beside a grave,
> And stand by it alone."

To her admirers in this country it is now as if her unconscious corpse were in banishment. The feeling is not to be repressed that sympathy and justice require us to look thitherward, and not to leave all that has passed to be quietly covered with oblivion."

"Should there," he asked, pursuing this subject, "be nothing more than an ejaculation of passive regret, when life has been made unendurable to one whom it seemed preparing to crown with fame and happiness? As yet in the very bloom of life, with growing powers and reputation, a new world of nature around her, and her former world anxiously beginning to calculate the length of her sojourn; endowed with qualities of heart that, by those who knew her, are spoken of still more enthusiastically than her clear intellect and brilliant fancy, and but recently entered on that stage which, if sanctified by the attention that constitutes its essence, is the most blissful on earth; what *could* produce the tremendous revulsion implied in

the fatal act? Any imputation, either on conduct or temper, as a disposing cause, is effectually precluded by the evidence of her husband. So entire was his satisfaction, so full his approval, that even slight and unavoidable irritability had met with no provocation, and he deposes that not an unkind word had ever passed between them. There must be some deep fault, some great personal or social wrong, somewhere; or whence the mournful catastrophe?"

Here, after many months have elapsed, and all possible inquiry has been anxiously and unweariedly made, we must leave what additional evidence has been dragged to light, to weigh against the melancholy impressions that her life had become "unendurable," and that the catastrophe was more "mournful" than accident or mere suddenness could render it. Against all such impressions we must religiously set, not merely the testimonies here collected, but the natural cheerfulness of her disposition, the buoyant feelings and resolute habits of a life—the crown of "fame and happiness" prepared for her—the growing powers and reputation, the new world of nature around her, and the recent entrance on that novel stage of enjoyment and interest adverted to above. Her amiable relative, the cousin who was her preceptor and friend in early youth, speaks of her thus:—"She endured pain with surprising fortitude whenever exertion was required; I have never met with any one who was so capable of it in any difficulty. Her ideas were always clear and at her command; she seemed

to see what others never thought of." Faith in this fortitude and self-sustaining power, may well guard us against gloomy and needless fears, when we remember how faithful was her discharge of duty in the more sacred relations of life, how lofty and severe was her sense of what yet remained for her to do in that respect, how cheerfully she looked forward to the task, and what advantages she possessed for accomplishing it honourably and happily.

A touching and graceful compliment was once paid to L. E. L. It was a tribute from America, sent from the far-off banks of the Ohio—a curious species of the Michegan rose, accompanied by a prayer that she would plant it on the grave of Mrs. Hemans. To no hand could it have been more appropriately transmitted, than to the hand which wrote so reverently and so rapturously of the genius of that gifted woman. Not only did L. E. L. (who missed the happiness of knowing Mrs. Hemans personally) pour out her love and praise in melodious verse, but in an essay on the character of her writings, admirably analyzed and asserted their claim to permanent remembrance. One solemn passage from this paper, will find here an appropriate place.

"Did we not know this world to be but a place of trial—our bitter probation for another and for a

better—how strange in its severity would seem the lot of genius in a woman. The keen feeling—the generous enthusiasm—the lofty aspiration—and the delicate perception—are given but to make the possessor unfitted for her actual position. It is well; such gifts, in their very contrast to the selfishness and the evil with which they are surrounded, inform us of another world—they breathe of their home, which is Heaven! *the spiritual and the inspired in this life but fit us to believe in that which is to come.* With what a sublime faith is this divine reliance expressed in all Mrs. Hemans's later writings. 'As the clouds towards nightfall melt away on a fine summer evening into the clear amber of the west, leaving a soft and unbroken azure whereon the stars may shine through; so the troubles of life, its vain regrets and vainer desires, vanished before the calm close of existence—*the hopes of Heaven rose steadfast, at last—the light shone from the windows of her home as she approached unto it.*"

We have said nothing of the religious principles of L. E. L., nor need we after this, which so eloquently expresses much in a few words; unless it be to remark, that even in regard to her religious feelings and belief, she was not always free from misrepresentation. She was a constant attendant at Divine worship. Faith and hope she had at all times in the beauty and heavenliness of Christi-

anity; and, if her charity exceeded even these in its truth and steadfastness, it was only because that has been pronounced to be the greatest of the Three.

To the foregoing may be added, as another instance of her superiority to literary jealousy, and of ungrudging admiration of genius and virtue in her own sex, her recollection of one "who was equally amiable and accomplished"—of her who married and went to India, "full of hope and belief, and thinking she might do much good; but the tomb suddenly closed upon her warm and kindly heart." The allusion is to the author of "The Three Histories," the excellent Miss Jewsbury, afterwards the wife of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher.

"I never met with any woman who possessed her powers of conversation. If her language had a fault, it was its extreme perfection. It was like reading an eloquent book—full of thought and poetry. She died too soon; and what noble aspirings, what generous enthusiasm, what kindly emotions went down to the grave with her unfulfilled destiny. There is no word that will so thoroughly describe her as "high-minded;" she was such in every sense of the word. There was no envy, no bitterness about her; and it must be a lofty nature that delights in admiration. Greatly impressed as I was with her powers, it surprised me to note how much she desponded over them.

'Day by day,
Gliding, like some dark mournful stream away,
My silent youth flows from me.'

"Alas! it was the shadow of the early grave that rested upon her."

No one who conversed as L. E. L. did could be insensible to the enjoyment of such companionship as Miss Jewsbury's. There was in it a moral, as well as an intellectual fascination; and L. E. L.'s gayer, and much less guarded and disciplined spirits were not proof against its influence. She has been tamed from high raillery, or almost childish glee, to a seriousness not less natural in her, though less seldom indulged in society, by the mastery of that eloquence, which she compares to a book full of thought and poetry. This charm was mutual. In thought, habit, manner, few persons bore less resemblance to each other; but there were some strong affinities of feeling between them, that brought them near and made them friends; some fine sympathies, which they had in common, and which fitted them to enjoy the converse both were so able to maintain. Perhaps the very contrasts between them favoured in some respects this appreciation of each others' powers. What L. E. L. thought of her grave and high-minded friend, she, on various occasions, expressed with characteristic warmth; how that friend thought and felt towards the brilliant L. E. L. we see expressed in a correspondence that followed their first meeting in London. At parting, Miss Jewsbury, playfully expressing her dislike "to be associated either on the 'red-leaved table' of a drawing-room, or of a heart, with an olive-coloured book," withdraws the

dim volume her friend had detained as a memorial, and substitutes one more appropriate. "The English of all which," she continues, "is, that you will never see Pascal again, but must take the accompanying memorial, instead of a very warm friend. And now, farewell! The feeling with which I bid you farewell would amount to real pain did I not hope to renew our intimacy next season, and exchange occasional letters between now and then. John Gilpin 'little dreamed when he set out' of losing his wig, nor I of losing any portion of any thing like heart. Farewell! Never write with a ruby pen to me, or eke a crow-quill. Abuse me as little as your witty mischief will permit, and shield me from the wit of others when convenient—

'And I'll avenge the feud myself
When I come o'er the sea!'

Furthermore take care of your health. Remember the sage citizeness's words—

'What avail these loads of wealth
Without that choicest blessing, health!'

Protect your chest like a miser. Finally, believe me, with truth and simplicity, very affectionately, and in many things very admiringly, your friend."

It was the fate of this deeply-regretted lady, as it was the fate, at no distant day, of her whom she thus addressed, to marry and quit her native coun-

try, to die prematurely amidst the new hopes and prospects that grow out of a new tie, but far from the old and cherished friends by whom she craved to be remembered.

——— " She pass'd from sight;—
So in the East comes sudden night!"

Death in a distant land, apparently amidst pleasant anticipations and favourable health, was also the melancholy fortune of a third lady, the acquaintance of both, and the frequent companion of one—Miss Emma Roberts; who had no sooner introduced to the public a sketch of the writings and character of L. E. L., by applying to her fate her own mournful lines—

" Alas! hope is not prophecy—we dream
But rarely does the glad fulfilment come;
We leave our land, and we return no more!"

than the passage became applicable to her who had quoted it in sympathy and regard.

Few ladies, perhaps, certainly few authoresses, have found more friends and acquaintances among their own sex than L. E. L. Some of them, possibly, she may have owed to that feeling which, associating her with her poetry and thus familiarizing itself, forbade the idea of strangership and the cold language of ceremony, even when addressing her for the first time. We assume, from the tone of several letters, that this was the case. Her introduction to Miss Mitford seems to have

had its origin partly in this feeling: since, designating her "My dear Miss Landon," she says, "I do not address you as a stranger because I cannot think of you as one." But however acquaintanceship may have in any case commenced, it is certain that her intimacies, amongst her own sex, were neither few nor slight. In several instances, honourable in every sense as conveying proofs of her virtuous feeling and amiable temper, these intimacies ripened into the closest and most trusting friendships. Nor was it her fortune merely to make friends, but to retain them to the last. Now and then, indeed, she might share the common lot, and find even her own sex "a little lower than the angels;" estrangement might here and there ensue, from some infirmity of temper, or some literary mistake; but of this she experienced as little as most people, while it was her happiness to feel that the ties of grateful attachment which bound her to some of the best and purest among women, grew stronger as they grew older.

We are not speaking here merely of literary intimacies, or, we should rather say, of intimacies with ladies to whom our literature is indebted. Of the friendship she thus enjoyed, some pleasant examples have been cited in the course of our narrative; and to the names of Mrs. Thomson, Mrs. Hall, Miss Roberts, Miss Mitford, Miss

Jewsbury, &c., may be added those of Lady Stepney, Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, Miss Jane Porter, Miss Louisa Stuart Costello, and Miss Strickland. But the list of acquaintances by whom she was held in estimation, and to whom her visits had often given pleasure, admits of many additions, in the names of Miss Turin, with whom she stayed in Paris, Mrs. General Fagan, to whom her latest letter was addressed, Lady Gore Ousely, Mrs. Dawson Damer, Mrs. Skinner, Mrs. Kemmis, Mrs. and Miss Sheldon, &c. from some of whom her marriage and departure from England brought letters expressive of the highest personal esteem, and the friendliest regret at the loss of her society. We need hardly here mention the Misses Lance—those amiable persons with whom it was L. E. L.'s good fortune to reside so long, who knew all her acts, all her habits, all her conduct so well, and who esteemed because they knew her.

While thus alluding to some of L. E. L.'s female friends, we are agreeably reminded of one who has that equal right to be included amongst them, which a long preserved and intimate attachment confers. We allude to Miss Thomson, now Mrs. John Moren, a young friend with whom L. E. L. frequently corresponded, and who, while these sheets were passing through the press, has favoured us with some pleasant proofs of her advantages in

that respect. These are to be found in the letters we now subjoin. The tone of them is too lively, pointed, and characteristic, not to be welcomed by every reader who may take an interest in the familiar writings of L. E. L. Though thus inserted out of place, the period at which they were written will be inferred from some of the subjects incidentally adverted to.

"Good, bad, or indifferent, my dearest Anna, I intend giving you a full and particular account of all my news, adventures, &c., I hope you are not particular as to quality, for truly nothing extraordinary has befallen me. I have been a little sullen and a little sick: the first was want of money, and the last, as they say in riddles, arose from my first. I am happy to tell you, that two pale pink cheques, inscribed with a name at once 'so dreaded and so dear,' (what lover's name will ever make my breast beat as does that of Messrs. Longman?) these, with one prescription of your father's, have completely restored that happy equilibrium which constitutes health; and I am under no present apprehensions that the professors of the 'London' will be enabled to demonstrate from my skull the origin of sense and sensibility. I beg you to observe the technicalities of my language; I have not read *the* 'Magazine' for nothing; I am grown so learned

on the transmigration of plants, that I made a sweet youth start and draw his chair three paces from mine at dinner in consequence. No smile could restore my lost ground, and we preserved a reverential distance during the dessert.

So ——— is married! Saturday last shone on white gloves, and whiter satin. I had a note from her, literally overflowing with happiness. I feel inclined to ask Solomon's question—'What is sweeter than honey?' for, truly, honeymoon seems nothing to express their felicity. Well, I do wish her all sorts of good wishes, and think she is as likely to be what you may call contented as anybody I know.

"Mrs. ——— has just interrupted me, to ask if I am writing to you on such 'nasty paper.' My dear Anna, you are to consider it as a personal compliment: you must expect that one who intends to be a constant correspondent cannot afford to ruin herself in satin paper, &c. That lady sends the kindest of loves. She is happy in the recent purchase of a superb chantilly veil, down to her knees, and a *vapeur* silk bonnet, lined with black velvet, trimmed with a leopard ribbon *vapeur* with large black floss-silk spots. She has no new flirtation on hand, and is living on the memory of your brother, and the hope of Pannizi.

"I dined last Sunday in Hinde-street. Coming home, I did not dare walk for my cold, so I rode;

the coach broke down, and I had to be pulled out of the window; a mere trifle, I can assure you, when you are used to it. My brother has been up in town for a week; I am happy to tell you I observed no symptoms of moonlight or melancholy about him. I have such a horror of living in the country: hawthorn hedges and unhappy attachments always go together in my mind; but when I found he listened with all the attention of interested conviction, when I said a lady's face should be looked for in the three per cents, and her figure in her landed property, I felt safe in the belief that he would deeply enter into the merits of an heiress. As for my own situation, I do think it very dangerous; for dull, desolate, and autumnal Hans-place is almost as bad as the country. Besides, idleness is the root of all mischief, and now my book is out, I have nothing to do; and the streets are perambulated by such picturesque-looking gentlemen in dark blue, that one forgets they are policemen, and fancies them into heroes.

Miss Fanny Kemble has produced such a sensation. I have not seen her. I want to see her in some other character than *Juliet*. I am afraid you will think it high treason, but it is not a favourite play of mine: it is anything but my *beau-ideal* of love. *Juliet* falls in love too suddenly, and avows it too openly; and *Romeo* changes too suddenly from

one lady to another; to my thought their love wants sentiment. *Viola* is my pet: so devoted—so subdued; began in girlhood—cherished as the lonely but deep feeling of after years; I think Shakspeare never drew a more exquisite picture of feminine love!"

At another time she writes:

"I take it for granted you intend attacking my most ungrateful self, and write to petition against meeting with my deserts. My only excuse for not writing is in the spirit of the French philosopher—the best thing you can do for your friends is to let them forget you. I do think I never passed so unfortunate or so miserable a year as since we last met. * * Once in difficulties, there you may remain; debts are like cross-roads, one leads into another; and it really is a very extravagant thing to be poor. * * If I could have seen you how glad I should have been to have talked to you; and the real cause why I have not written is, that to write a letter one must be by oneself; I then get thinking my own thoughts, till I am too much out of spirits to write. As for news, it is barely possible to have less to tell than I have; we are a little duller, if possible; the very policemen complain of their station, and petition to be removed from Hans-place.

"Mr. ——— is married, and has most unpatriotically married out of the parish. The lady is not pretty, and a saint. I was at some very gay balls at Miss ———; she had a new, and very good set of Americans. I liked the present minister's family so much. I have been to one or two pleasant dinners, and some very delightful parties. I find ——— the most exquisite addition to London; there is only one fault, that going to their house quite disgusts you with any other place. Comparatively, I went out very little last season. I am sick of parties, and go only for the credit of saying I have been there. Miss ——— has had a legacy left her, on the strength of which, she set out on a tour to Scotland; and did go as far as Barnet. She says she cannot sit down under her laurels, and intends leaving literary pursuits to needy people."

And now, we close our specimens of the letters of L. E. L. with a brief passage, wherein is displayed the mingled gravity and gaiety—the gay humour greatly preponderating—that generally constituted the feeling with which she alluded to any heavier or accumulated literary labour. Her good spirits, and her joy in the tasks she imposed upon herself, might usually be seen, as here, through the vehemence and ardour of her complaints of fatigue. She liked to tire herself.

"'Death or apology!' I offer neither; as to death, I don't—(discontented as I am with the world)—I do not precisely wish to die; and as to apology, no mere apology would, even if it satisfied you, satisfy myself; and yet come to Hendon I cannot; printers are 'stronger than love,' and the press 'more cruel than the grave.' I am in the agonies of my last volume, unable to sleep for thinking of my preface, and unable to eat for meditating my dedication; also, I know not which way to turn for a motto. Moreover, this is my very busiest time, writing for the annuals. Therefore, instead of apologizing, I leave you to judge of the impossibility. 'The fascinations of Hans place!' vivid must be the imagination that could discover them.

> 'Never hermit in his cell,
> Where repose and silence dwell,
> Human shape and human word,
> Never seen and never heard'—

had a life of duller calm than the indwellers of our square. * * There is one conclusion at which I have arrived, that a horse in a mill has an easier life than an author. I am fairly fagged out of my life."

Such parties as some of those which are alluded to in the preceding letters, as being to L. E. L.

sources of amusement at one time, and weariness at another, might be more specifically mentioned, were it necessary to show by what persons of worth and honour her society was courted. L. E. L. was never won by aristocratic influences alone—never captivated by title, or mere condescending profession. Miss Emma Roberts, who in many respects knew her so well, has remarked—"though exceedingly indifferent to the vanities of worldly intercourse, and not caring to number lords and ladies among her acquaintance, for the sake of their titles only, L. E. L. was by no means insensible to the more flattering testimonies of the esteem in which she was held by those whose good opinion conferred honour." And among the aristocracy were several persons, dignified alike by virtue and talent, who delighted to call her friend, and in whose esteem she was equally happy.

The reception her talents won for her in various distinguished circles, she insured to herself, to the very last, by her winningness of disposition and rectitude of conduct, and at no period of her life were such marks of kindness and appreciation conferred upon her as during the last two years of it. The election of her brother, which called forth many of these, has already been noticed, with the flattering expressions of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Hope upon that occasion. The list might be ex-

tended to considerable length ; in it would be found many illustrious names. And it should be mentioned that for no little of the interest and favour thus conferred on L. E. L., she was indebted to the generous sympathy of a lady whom she never even saw—to that kindly regard, admiration, and assistance, which talent is sure to experience from the Countess of Blessington. From a multitude of letters, by persons who could only be influenced by a high and disinterested sense of her deserts, passages of encomium might here be adduced, and woven, were it necessary, into an eulogy of which the most distinguished might be proud—that eulogy which renders the truest homage to genius, by estimating at a still higher value the moral excellence that dignifies and refines it.

It is much, to be admired and esteemed by many ; it is more, to have been truly beloved by a few ; and both these fortunes met in the destiny of L. E. L. It was her desert, and no more.

The qualities which claim our admiration, so far from being those with which the public were most familiar, were perhaps those which she least publicly exhibited. She did better justice to her moral than to her intellectual gifts. To her genius, exercised either in poetry or prose, she was only just learning to do justice when she died ; but in both the progress was perceptible and sure. We

have but to compare the light and spangled drapery of her earlier muse, with the chastened colours and the simpler forms in which Poetry came arrayed in her later productions, to see what she was yearly becoming, and to predict what she would have been if she had lived. High and solemn thought had found the place where wild fancy or extravagant sentiment alone had revelled before; knowledge had succeeded to mere impulse or reckless speculation; the feelings had become more deeply seated, as the heart beat less feverishly; the sportive child had sprung into the woman.

Look to the glowing and impassioned pages of the "Improvvisatrice;" admire all that is naturally musical in the verse, beautiful in the romance of affection, rich and graceful in the imagery; and then measure her success by the calmer and deeper tenor, the bolder combinations of thought, the loftier pictures, and the nobler purposes of her best poems in the "New Monthly," and the "Drawing-room Scrap-book." The ideal became purer as her knowledge of the actual advanced; and her dreams deepened in loveliness from her intercourse with the world. The severities of criticism, and more especially, perhaps, the sting of ridicule, aided in the production of this change. As she sprang almost from the arms of the teacher into those of fame, she had won the wreath of

poetry before she knew it was anything more lasting than a pretty ornament to be worn in a ball-room; and before she had found out its full value, it had apparently ceased to charm. To her active and unwearied mind, the contest for the prize was better than the possession of it. Quick and vivid sensation was a necessity in her nature; visions, rhapsodies, reveries, were the natural offspring of her excitable and imaginative temperament; these would make themselves heard, taking the expression of the moment, and she "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came;" she wrote on, because she could not help it.

But to what end? Was she to go on writing Troubadours and Golden Violets all her days—apostrophizing loves, memories, hopes, and fears, for ever, in scattered songs and uncompleted stanzas, and running the chance of weakening the effect of her past music by the monotony of the note? That she was in danger of doing this was indicated by the tide of criticism that set in against her. It stimulated her to a gradual change of the poetic note that had acquired for her more popularity than she could permanently retain. Her thoughts found a deeper channel, and flowed still more freely; her observation took a wider range, and scanned the features of life as they presented themselves to her earnest gaze—not as she had

imaged them in the pages of chivalry and romance, or shaped them for herself amidst the grotesque fancies of a dream. She discovered that her powers acquired elasticity, as the subjects on which they were exercised became more various; and that the world widened as she went on. Reality, in short, grew as familiar to her as Romance. She led Prose captive, as she had led Poetry. She became the author of "Francesca Carrara," and of "Ethel Churchill." Compare these works (the latest of them written in 1837) as evidences of advance with the Romance and Reality of 1830.

It was still provoking, occasionally, to observe a lingering attachment to some of her worst faults—to see her, with the consciousness that she had scattered the seeds of many pleasures in the world, with a full sense of what ought by all to be enjoyed, and of the human capacity to enjoy, perversely contrasting the actual with the ideal, not seemingly with a view to kindle emulation in her readers, but to put them out of heart with themselves; to find her deprecating what is, for the mere sake of glorifying what is not and cannot be. It would have been delightful to own that she had entirely ceased to cultivate her want of faith in the world's virtue, since nobody had more practical charity for the world's vice. But the pleasure next to this remains for us, in the proof that she was in a fair way

to do it; that her advance to a right understanding of her own powers was regular and certain; and that her use of those fine gifts was becoming as admirable as the gifts themselves.

To her affections, throughout this period of intellectual progress—to her womanly sympathies—to her kind and generous disposition, she did ample justice. "Whatever errors may have been hers," observes a living writer, in a letter full of sad regrets for her loss, "what excuses she had! and what noble qualities! what independence of spirit—what generosity and loftiness of feeling! The head of a man, and the heart of a woman."

Much as she was misrepresented, we never knew L. E. L. to be even suspected of a *meanness*. Of anything little, or paltry, or shabbily selfish, she was utterly incapable. She seemed in her very soul to scorn whatever was sordid. On the other hand, we know that she was capable of the most unselfish, the most imprudently generous actions. In pecuniary matters, this may almost be said to have been her ordinary rule of conduct. To the last, she was in the habit of giving away her labour, which to her was money—as she would give away the money with which her principal labours were rewarded. We know her to have offered, upon one occasion, in a manner the most exquisitely delicate, fifty pounds which she could very ill spare,

to a friend who had no claim upon her on earth, but for the good wishes which were mutual. In some years, her income was not small, though, for the reason stated, her literary profits were seldom so large as they seemed to be; and in one of those years, 1832, she derived an extra sum of between three and four hundred pounds, under the will of her grandmother, who appointed her sole executrix and legatee. Yet this, like all her literary receipts, she expended freely and liberally; so little of her money being "laid out upon herself," that those who only knew that she received such sums and did not hoard them, wondered what she did with them. Her own occasional inconveniences, from a scarcity of funds, only served to render her more keenly alive to the necessities of any one, whom her affection, her esteem, or her gratitude, in its romantic excess, had invested with a claim upon her assistance.

In our cursory remarks upon her writings, we have freely commented upon her passion for effect. The reflection here occurs—how different a person was the L. E. L. who delighted in saying brilliant things, to the L. E. L. who delighted in doing disinterested and generous actions. Here there never was the remotest view to effect—never the most distant consciousness that any advantage was to be gained by the good done, but the pleasure of doing it. The author ceased to exist when the pen was

laid down. She reversed in her practice the quality attributed to Garrick—she never acted when off the stage; it was then that she became most herself, and most merited the praise of being "natural, simple, affecting." She was most beautiful when farthest removed from those artificial lights in which she was too fond of exhibiting herself. In her, the constant flush of the affections was, after all, lovelier than the sparkling fancy or the glowing intellect.

What her real feelings towards her friends were, may be partly seen by her letters to some of the dearest of them; this is to a certain extent true also of her opinions and tastes; but here she was not so serious, and the rule is the less unerring. We find an example in a fact to which Dr. Thomson has directed our attention, that notwithstanding her devoted affection for the metropolis, expressed in several of the letters now published, she had in reality a fine taste for the beauties of the country. "In a visit," says that constant friend of L. E. L., "with which she favoured us at Brokham, near Dorking, we were in the habit of walking out daily; and whilst Mrs. Thomson would sit down to sketch from nature,* L. E. L. would take my arm and range over the fields for hours toge-

* The incident is alluded to in one of the last letters L. E. L. ever wrote. How fondly were such scenes remembered in Africa!

ther, stopping every now and then to expatiate on the beauty of some new opening scene, or to listen while I explained the botanical character of a wild flower, or some fact in vegetable physiology. On these occasions she would make observations and hazard opinions, which obviously demonstrated that the grasp of her intellect would have been productive of equally great results in whatever direction it had been turned, whether by accident or by circumstances. She long recurred with pleasure to that visit; and it was, on that occasion, that I first was enabled to estimate justly, the depth of her affection, as well as the capaciousness of her intellect; the one warm, generous, unalterable—the other capable of any effort, imaginative or substantial. Her powers of conversation, when her mind was not bent on being playful, were great, and her remarks original. Whatever might have been the irritability of L. E. L. in early life, she, at that visit, displayed the sweetest and most amiable temper—mild, gentle, and conciliating; and on no future occasion had I ever cause to alter this opinion of her disposition."

L. E. L. deserved the praise which in one emphatic word she bestowed upon her friend, Miss Jewsbury—she was high-minded. This she was, whatever errors and weaknesses might intervene, in every important relationship of life; this she was

alike in the liberality of her conditions with publishers—in the reliance she placed on all good intentions—and in intercourse under any circumstances with friends; this she was under every trial of her affections, amidst all injustice to which she was exposed, and throughout her conduct to her family. What she was during the brief interval between her marriage and her death, her husband has told us—she was animated by the purest sense of duty—a being the most devoted and self-denying—all that is most enduring, courageous, and uncensurable.

We have now a pleasant duty, to connect with these records the recollections of two or three of L. E. L.'s personal friends, and the tributes of a few other writers who have expressed themselves most worthily in relation alike to her genius and her misfortunes.

And with respect to her genius, the course she should have more diligently pursued for its cultivation, was pointed out in a friendly note, written by the late William Gifford, to a mutual acquaintance, just before his relinquishment of the editorship of the "Quarterly Review," in respect to which he says, "there is little or no chance of my holding my station for another number." Had

L. E. L. strictly followed his plain advice, she would earlier have attained the elevation to which her later writings were rapidly advancing her.

"Meanwhile," he says, "the young lady must prune her wings for a steadier flight. She has fancy, a good ear, a command of poetical language, and a quick succession of imagery; but all these will not make a good, much less a great poet, without correct taste and feeling and knowledge. Your amiable friend, she may be assured, cannot retain her present elevation in the public mind, but by something of a more decisive description, of a more uniform and direct tendency than her last poem. If I might advise her, she should no longer dance from measure to measure in the same story, but end with that she began—either lyric or heroic:—and let her plan her subject at first, and not trust to accident for its course and end."

The passages that follow are selected from recollections which we owe to a female pen—the same that supplied a note descriptive of L. E. L.'s study, in the earlier part of our narrative. Since this lady's personal acquaintance with L. E. L. commenced, in 1835, the circumstances of occasional intercourse have been peculiarly favourable for knowing and estimating her rightly. Little, indeed, as she remarks, can we judge of real character from the superficial views only which general

society presents; least of all, of such beings as L. E. L.

"It was my privilege to associate with her in a circle comprising some among the few of her heart's chosen and trusted friends—those to whom she opened her inmost soul—those as she emphatically said, 'who loved her for her own sake, not admiring or flattering her because she was L. E. L.' The idea of being sought merely for her literary popularity ever roused her disdain; and she would speak in no measured terms of persons who considered themselves as patronizing literary characters, by inviting them as sources of amusement or objects of curiosity. 'What!' she would indignantly exclaim, quoting her own expressive lines—

> 'Be made the wonder of a night,
> *As if the soul could be a sight!*'

"By the friends referred to she was understood and appreciated in all her varying moods, literary or social. Their homes were the green and sunny spots where her spirit looked for rest when worn and wearied in the crowded highways of the world. Their generous kindness, and protecting care, were around her during the last few months she dwelt in her native land, securing her comfort, and shielding her from anxiety.

"How vividly does memory recal my first visit

with L. E. L., that lonely morning room with its sweet garden prospect, its birds and flowers, its books and works of art, all arranged with exquisite taste. The place itself was one of the few spots out of town for which L. E. L. seemed to possess an affection. There she often read to us, sometimes her own poems. Her style of reading was peculiar, a kind of recitative, more poetical than musical, derived rather from the soul than from the ear—but giving the fullest effect to every variation of thought, feeling, and character. She became for the time a literal improvvisatrice; and you listened entranced to the earnest but varying intonations of her voice, as if it were pouring from her soul in all their first freshness, the beautiful creations, of which she was the previous originator.

"With evening usually came a change over L. E. L. In the more general circle which the dinner hour assembled, she might often be found like her own Eulalie—

> 'The centre of a group whose courage light
> Made a fit element, in which her wit
> Flash'd like the lightning.'

It was often interesting to compare the L. E. L. of the morning with the Miss Landon of the evening. Alike, yet how different. Genius now folded its wings, and walked forth in the garb of social life.

Yet still might that genius be recognized in the courteous and nicely fitting compliment, the piquant remark, the brilliant repartee, and sometimes in the full flow of eloquence. Abundantly amusing was it to watch how she almost intuitively read the characters of those before her, and with what tact she adapted her conversation to each and all. In their varying tastes, however opposed to her own, she would be sure to express a graceful interest. She never appeared conscious of her own superiority—one often heard her spoken of as a pleasant, unassuming girl. There seemed, also, constantly in exercise, a good-natured toleration of what, by many, would be deemed impertinent. One evening, a 'butterfly of fashion' hearing Miss Landon's name mentioned, begged for an introduction; and, in a few minutes afterwards, seated with L. E. L. on a step of the conservatory, was heard to express her satisfaction in having met with such a kindred heart, as she was sure Miss Landon's must prove!

"It was an especial pleasure to hear her converse on Shakspeare. It was more difficult to please her taste on this than on any other literary subject. Very few criticisms came up to her standard. These characters, she would say, require not only the feeling of a poet to appreciate, but the analytic skill of a philosopher to examine them as they de-

serve. To her favourable opinions of the works of her contemporaries, L. E. L. ever gave free and generous expression. Writing to a young author, she observes, 'Criticism never yet benefitted a really original mind; such a mind macadamizes its own road.' Jealousy seemed utterly opposed to her nature. In the petty rivalries which sometimes disturb the outer-court worshippers of the Muses, she even disdained to take part, except in vindication of a friend. Her disposition was peculiarly disinterested; she never paused to think of herself when others required any assistance which she could bestow.

"Many people have been at a loss to reconcile her love of poetry with her apparent indifference to music and painting. That she did not care for scientific music, nor for elaborate pictures, merely as music or as painting, was certainly true; yet, in the midst of an interesting conversation, a few notes of melody floating to her ear from an adjoining room would cause her to start up, utter an exclamation of deep emotion, and then diverge from the previous topic into some discussion most musical and sweet. As for painting, it was impossible that its combinations should not be duly appreciated by one whose own taste was exquisitely picturesque, using that term in its artistic, rather than in its sometimes more romantic application. Miss Lan-

don's refined taste would instantly detect the slightest incongruity in the arrangements of a room, in the appointment of a table, in the adaptation of colours in dress, and in the attitudes and manners of persons. Equally quick was she in admiring to the least minutiæ any circumstances accordant with the principles of good taste. L. E. L.'s appreciation of painting, like that of music, was intellectual rather than mechanical, belonging to the combinations rather than to the details; she loved the poetical effects and suggestive influences of the arts, although caring little for their mere technicalities.

"Everything seemed accomplished by her without effort. Her thoughts seemed to spring up spontaneously on any proposed subject; so that her literary tasks were completed with a quickness that to slower minds wore almost the aspect of intuition. In truth she could say—

'I but call
My trusty spirits, and they come.'

In her conversation, too, there was the like use, the like rapidity of transition, together with a correspondent quickness of utterance, as if her beautiful thoughts were glad to escape into expression. With what rapidity would she utter such sentiments as the following:—'It ever seems so strange

to me that people should mistake the semblance of excessive cheerfulness, when it is assumed only as a mask to conceal the real features of the wearer. When mirth takes a sarcastic form, it always gives me an idea of the speaker's own internal wretchedness or deep sense of injury; for when does the foam mantle highest on the wave and sparkle brightest in the sunshine? Is it not when that wave is passing over the jagged rock, and the rough stone, lurking beneath?'

"The last period, of any length, I spent under the same roof with L. E. L., was for a month immediately before her departure from England. Her mind and her time were necessarily so occupied, that we had only occasional glimpses of her own real self. Sometimes, however, she would throw off all that pressed upon her, and be entirely the L. E. L. of former days."

It has been remarked that it was only when with the frivolous that she assumed frivolity. The writer of the above recollections, therefore, must have seen her in her happier and more serious moods.

Mrs. S. C. Hall, commenting upon the portraits of her lamented friend, remarks,

"It is singular that so few portraits of this accomplished woman should have been painted. For nearly twenty years she occupied a large portion of public attention; and, during the whole of her career, was almost idolized by the young and

warm-hearted. Although certainly not beautiful—perhaps she can scarcely be described as handsome—her countenance possessed that which an artist prizes above beauty, at least above the beauty that is without it—EXPRESSION; her features were not regular, but they were pleasing and attractive at all times; and when animated, had a character approximating to loveliness. Her form, too, though *petite*, was graceful. She had a large acquaintance among artists, to whose society she was always especially partial. Is it not strange, then, that so few have employed the pencil in perpetuating the remembrance of one so dear to fame, and whose works must for ever form a conspicuous part of the literary history of the age?"

That she merited every compliment at their hands, by her own high conceptions of painting, and her qualification for judging of whatever was most elevated in the works of artists, is undoubtedly true; and evidence of her sympathy with them is given with matchless force and beauty, in the "Subjects for Pictures," which appear in these volumes.

The same writer observes—

"Though quite unskilled in the language of the schools, she had a fine feeling for

'The art that can immortalize.'

I remember her once speaking of artists in her usual animated and pictorial manner, and concluding by saying, 'that they deserved all honour, they idealized humanity.' What a string of pearls I might have gathered, had I noted down the thoughts that fell in sayings from her lips."

In 1822 or 3, she sat to Mr. Pickersgill for a

portrait. It has not been engraved; though like, in many respects, it was not a pleasing resemblance. An engraving that accompanied a sketch of her life, in the "New Monthly," some years ago, was still less successful; and we remember the gravity with which she complained that the painter, or the engraver, had magnified her ears, of the prettiness of which she could not but be conscious, in a most libellous manner. To Maclise she sat three or four times, with better success on each occasion. With the last portrait from his hand it would be unreasonable to be in any way dissatisfied. It is a delightful record of the serene, yet lively, thoughtfulness that was so often seen to lighten up her expressive countenance. Later than this, and but a few months before her marriage, a medallion portrait of her, in plaster, was executed by Mr. Weekes. Although the profile was not the happiest view of her face, the likeness is sufficiently faithful to be very agreeable; and were the throat less long, and the bust less broad and full, the resemblance would be perfect. It is cleverly executed, but has not yet been published. Nor should we here forget to mention the miniature likeness with which the grateful anxiety of Mr. Schloss adorned his "Bijou Almanack."

As a pen and ink drawing, we know nothing so minutely and carefully filled up as the following

portrait, for which we are indebted to the loving remembrance of a youthful friend of L. E. L., with whose name we are unacquainted. With one or two exceptions which we are disposed to make, for there will be differences of opinion even about such matters of fact as lofty foreheads and black lashes, the picture is no exaggeration, and may be received as an atonement for the feebleness of the sketch which our own recollection has supplied:—

"It was strange to watch," says her admiring friend, "the many shades of varied feeling which passed across her countenance even in an hour. I can see her now—her dark silken hair braided back over a small, but what phrenologists would call a well developed head; her forehead lofty, and full and open, although the hair grew low upon it; the eyebrows perfect in arch and form; the eyes round, soft, or flashing, as they might be—grey, well-formed, and beautifully set—the lashes long and black, the under ones turning down with a delicate curve, and forming a soft relief upon the tint of her cheek, which, when she enjoyed good health, was bright and blushing; her complexion was delicately fair; her skin soft and transparent; her nose small *(retrousée)*; the nostril well defined, slightly curved, but capable of a scornful expression, which she did not appear to have the power of repressing, even though she gave her thoughts no words, when any mean or despicable action was alluded to; it would be difficult to describe her mouth; it was neither flat nor pouting, neither large nor small; the under jaw projected a little beyond the upper; her smile was deliciously animated; her teeth white, small and even, and her voice and laugh soft, low, and musical; her ears were of peculiar beauty, and all who understand the beauty of the human head know that the ear is either pleasing to look upon, or

much the contrary; her's were very small, and of a delicate hue, and her hands and feet even smaller than her sylph-like figure would have led one to expect. She would have been of perfect symmetry were it not that her shoulders were rather high; her movements, when not excited by animating conversation, were graceful and lady-like; but, when excited, they became sudden and almost abrupt."

Of the warm and eloquent praise lavished upon her by "Blackwood's Magazine" in 1830, she proved herself more and more deserving year after year. Such recognition of her powers might well encourage her to mature them by deeper study and worthier care for their direction.

"Tickler.—I love L. E. L.

"North.—So do I, and being old gentlemen we may blamelessly make the public our *confidante*. There is a *passionate purity* in all her feelings that endears to me both her human and her poetical character. She is a true enthusiast. Her affections overflow the imagery her fancy lavishes on all the subjects of her song, and colour it all with a rich and tender light which makes even confusion beautiful, gives a glowing charm even to indistinct conception, when the thoughts themselves are full formed and substantiated, which they often are, brings them promiscuously out upon the eye of the soul in flashes that startle us into sudden admiration. The originality of her genius, methinks, is conspicuous in the choice of its subjects—they are unborrowed; and in her least successful poems—as wholes, there is no dearth of poetry. Her execution has not the consummate elegance and grace of Felicia Hemans; but she is very young, and becoming every year she lives more mistress of her art, and has chiefly to learn how to use her treasures, which, profuse as she has been, are in abundant store,

and, in good truth, the fair and happy being has a fertile imagination—the soil of her soul, if allowed to lie fallow for one sunny summer, would, I predict, yield a still richer and more glorious harvest. I love Miss Landon—for in her genius does the work of duty, the union of the two is "beautiful exceedingly," and virtue is its own reward; far beyond the highest meed of praise ever bestowed by critic—though round her fair forehead is already wreathed the immortal laurel.

"TICKLER.—Her novel is brilliant.

"NORTH.—Throughout.

"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

There was a critical observation in the "Athenæum" on the appearance of "Ethel Churchill," which should be added here:—

"We find in the prose writings of Miss Landon the same warmth of feeling as in her verse. The language only is changed; the genius that prompts it is the same. But the qualities that have established her fame as a poetess occasionally interfere with the full development of her powers as a writer of novels. In all, we admit there are fine and noble thoughts beautifully expressed; her personages think wisely, tenderly, or romantically, as suits her purpose; they speak eloquently and wittily, but they seldom *act*. Her novels, in fact, are more records of feelings, than narratives of events. Instead of giving her full attention to working out a character, or unravelling an artfully involved plot, she pours forth from the fulness of her own heart a profusion of deep and eloquent reflections, which, though excellent in themselves, do not assist in the progress of the story. But readers must be more critical than we are disposed to be if they find much fault with a habit from which they derive so much pleasure. These episodes are indeed the characteristics of Miss Landon's style; and we confess we would not change them for an improvement in the mere machinery of a novel."

The author of an article on the Female Novelists in the "Edinburgh Review," discussed L. E. L.'s pretensions to a distinguished place amongst them, in a spirit of liberal appreciation. Conscientiousness of judgment, accompanied by brilliancy of expression, gave value to this critic's praise; his objections were not prejudice, nor his acknowledgments flattery. There could be no risk in grounding upon the opinion of such writers, the assertion, that L. E. L.'s place in modern literature would have been no unelevated one had she never written a single poem.

In "Fraser's Magazine" for January, 1840, appeared the following comments on her genius, her character, and her fate:—

"She had herself predicted, though speaking in the character of another,—

"'Where my father's bones are lying,
There my bones will never lie;
* * * *
Mine shall be a lonelier ending,
Mine shall be a wilder grave,
Where the shout and shriek are blending,
Where the tempest meets the wave;
Or perhaps a fate more lonely,
In some drear and distant ward,
Where my weary eyes meet only
Hired nurse and sullen guard.'
* * * *

"In her poems there are unquestioned indications of genius

and sometimes the indication is fulfilled by her execution. She had a deep and sweet feeling of affection, and a fine eye for the more ornamental and picturesque beauties of the external world, which she frequently expressed in harmonious verse, suggested by copious reading of various literature, and regulated by a musical and practised ear. With the young she was always a favourite: other ladies—for by ladies it must be done if at all—may, but hardly soon, supplant her in that favour. May their career be less burthened by wearisome exertion, their close less sorrowful than hers! At the period of her death she was rapidly rising in all that could gratify a lady and an authoress—in general estimation, in public honour, in increasing respect—as well as in the more matured development of her genius, made evident in her prose compositions. "Ethel Churchill" is, indeed, a work of beauty and talent, for which it would be hard to find a parallel in the history of female authorship. And then, when the prospect of her taking a place in her land's language was within her sight—*then* she died. The promise of her life was unfulfilled:—

"'Life is made up of miserable hours;
And all of which we craved a brief possessing,
For which we wasted wishes, hopes, and powers,
Comes with some fatal drawback on the blessing—
We might have been.
The future never renders to the past
The young beliefs entrusted to its keeping.
Inscribe one sentence—life's first truth and last
On the pale marble where our dust is sleeping—
We might have been.'

"Who wrote those lines? Miss Landon! What *she* might have been, is now idle to conjecture; but, apart from her literary abilities and her literary industry, she *was*, in every domestic relation of life, honourable, generous, dutiful, self-denying; zealous, disinterested, and untiring in her friend-

ships; and, as an ornament of society, what Miss Jewsbury called her—'a gay and gifted thing.'"

The able writer, whose speculations on her death have been already adverted to and quoted, eloquently bore witness to the noble generosity of her nature as indicated in her works:—

"The loss of a writer, and that writer a woman whose career had commenced so brilliantly and promised so much, had her life been spared and her circumstances propitious, of fame for herself and enjoyment to others, is properly regarded as a public loss. Her works indicated a noble and generous nature, an organization of passionate sensibility, and a correctness and keenness of observation rarely combined with those qualities in early life. And if this lustre was not wholly unobscured by occasional conventionalism, by a luxuriant verbiage, and by a factitious melancholy, still there was reason to hope that the poetical genius which was in her would, as its strength became matured, have scattered the mists and shone forth in its natural splendour. That hope is suddenly blighted. 'A star has left the kindling sky,' (to borrow from the beautiful song that was one of her latest compositions, and is so full of seeming presentiments or analogies of her own fate); and

> "'The voyage it lights no longer, ends
> Soon on a foreign shore.'

She sleeps in she barren sands of Africa, and the mournful music of the billows to which she listened in her solitary sea-girt dwelling, is now the dirge that resounds over her distant grave."

What remains of our task is of a less doubtful and less melancholy character. It is simply to

introduce to public notice her latest writings; the dramatic work (her only one) which she completed just previous to her departure from England, and the essays on the female characters of Scott, which were the interesting and appropriate subjects of her last literary speculations when in Africa.

The reader, as he peruses those glowing records of a woman's thoughts and feelings in relation to some of the most beautiful pictures of passion, sentiment, and character in her sex that genius has bequeathed to us, will not find his emotions less pleasurable from this reflection,—How many anxious and troubled hours may these, her last compositions, have lightened? How much pain, whether of sickness, or of watching over sickness, may they have helped to dissipate? How much of solitude may they have peopled with familiar and delightful images? What associations of old friends and of the old home may they have awakened!—of youthful hours deliciously spent over the pages she was illustrating—of early desires to see some bright creations of her own, also, entwined with her land's language—of hopes already not unfulfilled, and of a future that was to give reality to her fondest dreams!

These are reflections that will occur at least to some readers, and hence, perhaps, a pleasant and grateful conclusion that the mind which could so

exert itself—so turn in a new position to its old pursuits—so employ its best and happiest energies with such vivid and successful results, must have been nobly sustained and fortified even to the very last.

It has been the fashion, as we have seen, to judge of the tone of L. E. L.'s ordinary feelings by the tone of her more earnest writings—to decide that when her poetry presented but a succession of sombre and desolate images, her heart was world-weary and her life miserable—to argue from her intellectual to her moral tendencies, and to assume that those subjects of uncontrollable fate, early and withering disappointment, premature but welcome death, to which her imagination reverted, were but pictures drawn from her experience of life, and pre-figurings of her hopeless and inevitable future. Let this rule be applied at least consistently: we should rather say, let her for once be judged not unjustly by this principle. If evidence of the healthy, the animated, the cheerful flow of her thoughts and feelings in her last days, may be drawn from her writings—in the subjects upon which she was employed, and in her sparkling and picturesque style of treating them—that evidence will be found in her criticisms and reflections on the female characters of the illustrious Novelist. The new novel upon which she was herself en-

gaged, the first volume being finished in Africa, affords evidence to the same effect, and equally strong; it is the opening of a story of modern life and manners, comic and satirical in its spirit; but too dependent for its effect upon the consecutiveness of its scenes, and the shadowy contrasts of its family likenesses, to admit of its set of sketches being separated with success.

From the morning of her marriage to the morning of her death, she was too incessantly occupied by necessary duties and habits of literary exercise, in which she never relaxed, to sit down, even for an instant, under the shadow of despondings thoughts. Brief, however, was the interval between: it was the breathless moment betwixt "the flash and thunder." As she stood at the altar in her bridal garments, beloved friends surrounding her, with her brother presiding at those rites whose very solemnity is half joy, even then, to borrow a fine image of her own from "Castruccio,"

> "——— her shadow fell upon her grave,
> She stood so near to it."

But, short and hurried as the time was, she neglected no duty, shrank from no call upon her intrepidity and watchfulness, forfeited no particle of claim to our admiration and regard: this, above all the rest, is certain and consolatory. A "minis-

tering angel" amidst her husband's sickness; enduring, almost uncomplaining, under her own; self-denying and absorbed in care for others; thus, herself to the last, consistently ended the life of L. E. L.

A monument to her memory will ere long be erected in this country; probably in that church at Brompton which for years she attended, near which she through life resided, and in whose burial-place the "first grave" was beautifully commemorated by her pen. For herself, whose ashes should have rested beneath such a tribute to her genius and virtues—"She sleeps in the barren sands of Africa, and the mournful music of the billows, to which she listened in her solitary sea-girt dwelling, is now the dirge that resounds over her distant grave."

Note.—I must be permitted to observe, that the arguments which have been advanced relative to the cause of death—arguments founded on indications unfavourable to the supposition of death by prussic acid, do not depend for their validity upon any statement of Emily Bailey's. The facts from which I have chiefly drawn the inferences referred to are of the same weight with or without that person's testimony; they are established by the evidence of other witnesses, and are therefore unaffected by her general want of veracity—which, since the pages referred to were written, has become sufficiently glaring.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

JOHN LEIGHTON, PRINTER, 11, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

00023366

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 27 February, 2016